Re:Monster

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オガ吉 改め ミノ吉
牛頭鬼→新種に【存在進化】したアポ朗の親友。
棍棒や斧など、重量級の武器を得意とする。
岩勇
【四象勇者】の一人である【岩鉄の勇者】。
物理攻撃は四人の勇者の中で最強。
第一王妃
始祖王ロルギスの血を引く、お転婆姫の実母。
闇勇
王国が誇る【四象勇者】の一人である【闇守の勇者】。
どこか得体の知れない、怪しい女性。
ダム美 改め カナ美
アポ朗と共に生まれ育った仲間にして妻。
現在の種族は吸血貴族・亜種。
オガ朗 改め アポ朗
ゴブリンに転生した主人公。
【吸収能力】によって、喰えば喰うほど強くなる。
現在は絶滅鬼・絶滅種に【存在進化】している。
女武者
アポ朗同様、別世界からの来訪者である【異邦人】。
水勇
【四象勇者】の一人である【水霊の勇者】。
仕事ならなんでもこなす危険な男。
お転婆姫
シュテルンベルト王国の王女。
線の細い見た目に反して、性格は相当わがまま。
Main Characters
主な登場人物

Day 136

While training the second group of palace guards this morning, a messenger came to me around noon with a message from the Tomboy Princess' mother, the First Queen.

In case you were wondering, this is the exact same queen that is deeply religious that I had worries about before....

As I expected, there wasn't any way that she wouldn't contact us during our stay here.

Honestly though, I'm not too worried about trouble, especially given that she actually went through the trouble of approaching us first. That being said, I came to the conclusion that it's not necessarily possible to decline her invitation without consequence.

It looks like I have been invited to eat lunch with the First Queen. It seemed pretty reasonable for me to be summoned to do so, so in all honesty, it

really can’t be helped at all. Though all the same, it’s something i’d prefer to avoid.

I was informed that I’m allowed to bring one partner along, so I had Kanami-chan accompany me.

After that, the Princess brought the Boy Knight along with her which gave us a total count of four people.

Although there were many palace guards and maids in the area, we were left completely alone. Lunch took place in a very beautiful courtyard located deep within the Platinum Palace in which the Queen took her residence.

The queen that was hosting the lunch resembled the Tomboy Princess quite a bit. She had long silver hair that seemed to shine beautifully with her deep, golden colored eyes. The Queen’s skin was fair which combined with her other features, only seemed to make her even more beautiful, yet her skin did give her a touch of frailty and give her a sickly looking nature. It seemed that the lunch was not going to be full of hearty meat dishes, but instead a light meal centered upon bread and vegetables. For myself, I wanted to consume a vast quantity of delicious meat, so I found the bread and vegetables that were offered to be highly unsatisfactory, however, at least Kanami-chan seemed to enjoy it… Even though the amount and type of food wasn’t sufficient for me personally, I quietly stifled my dissatisfaction since it DID taste delicious…

As for the queen, when we spoke, she didn't give off a bad impression. This is probably because she spoke to me with actual respect, or to be more precise… she spoke to me with respect and… affection… of perhaps I should rather say that there weren't any negative emotions in her speech. Her attitude was similar to a believer who genuinely viewed the person in front of her with great respect. There were no signs of impending outbursts of violence, such as attempting to kill me and devouring my body which carries a god's divine protection in a zealous attempt to cleanse one's whole body by bathing in my fresh blood or using my bones as sacred adornments... While feeling relieved at those points, I decided to observe my surroundings.

In the end, it was quite a worthwhile lunch part.

The first impression I had of the queen has changed.

It seems that she has an amiable character. It may have been possible for this acquaintanceship to change into a good friendship in time. ...Or… At least that's what I thought for a moment… After we finished with the lunch and returned to the Amber Palace, my clone which I had left in the Platinum Palace witnessed the final event.

This event in particular, convinced me that I wanted as little to do with the queen as physically, and or in any other shape or form, possible.

To quickly summarize what happened without touching on this subject for too long… it went something like this:

Naturally, after we finished eating and returned, there was the used tableware left behind.

Of course, one would expect the table to be cleared of it's tableware and completely cleaned to be prepared for the next time it would be used.

However, the Queen willingly picked up the knife and fork that I used this time and fell into a trance as she passionately licked them clean with an… overly enthusiastic look on her face…

Yummy

Then, the beautiful noblewomen with fair skin, shining silver hair and golden colored pupils let out an extremely… alluring sound. In any case… Is licking the silverware that I used that delightful…?

The Platinum Palace's guards in the vicinity of the Queen, which seemed to be almost all women, watched the queen with envious expressions on their faces.

What the hell is going on…?

Also, why was the tableware that was licked clean placed into a luxurious

case of it’s own and put into a display case in the Queen’s bedroom? There were an endless tide of questions that I wanted to ask, however, I honestly have no further wish to become better acquainted with the Queen after this series of events.

My story about the Queen, which has easily exceeded my common sense in various ways, ends here. I determined that it was best to proactively avoid associating with her… sigh… at least for the time being… Shaking off the scene I had just witnessed…

I decided to take all of my confusion and frustration out on the training the group of palace knights for the rest of the afternoon to put this behind me.

Day 137

This morning, I began the training of the third group of palace guards.

Unfortunately… it was raining that day.

The condition of the training grounds was horrible, the ground, which had absorbed a large quantity of water had become very muddy and thus very slippery. This made it difficult to keep your footing and move around in. Most of all, our clothes became filthy.

A high percentage of the Amber Palace's guards that were women voiced a desire to cancel the training session, however, I encouraged them to continue regardless. Their objections were thoroughly silenced with hard training and forced effort.

Moreover, with their bodies exhausted, the meal they had afterwards tasted even more delicious. Maybe I should continue this carrot and stick policy to encourage more effort.

For now though, I think it's important for them to be able to fight even if the weather's bad, it's something that you cannot control.

When the time comes to defend the [Royal Family], you don't get to choose the weather.

Although I don't think I want to do this everyday, it's a good idea to mix it up

every once in awhile.

I’ll try to keep this in mind.

Day 138

I entrusted today's training to Kanami-chan since today I am rather forcefully being taken by the Tomboy Princess to meet with her father, the King.

The meeting, with the exception of us, was full of many nobles voicing their complaints, many of which were being rather overly exaggerated. I'll leave out a majority of the lengthy conversation, but it seems that the Sternbild Kingdom has recognized us as the Princess' private soldiers. Since we're mercenaries, once we finish our job and collect the reward, we'd be free to join the opposing faction.

However, it seems that the Princess has, in some way, spread that we have been recognized as her private army. When I carried her into the meeting on my shoulder, she acted as if she was connected to it.

To the Sternbild Kingdom, we're already part of the faction that protects the Princess, so it seems very unlikely that we'd be hired by someone else. Considering the hostile glares that they were giving us, I'm guessing that the Nobles Faction, centered around the Minister, is most likely the opposing faction.

Well, so long as we're paid, it's not a particularly big issue, however, I can't make light of the fact that our opportunity to escape was cut off.

With an adorable expression, the Princess conducted her business like royalty would. Well, since I'm also using the Princess in various ways, I guess this is fair trade-off of sorts.

I let out a small sigh. For the time being, it seems that the Tomboy Princess' private army has caused the higher ups of the Sternbild Kingdom to be cautious. It also seems likely that people who fear the power that she possesses will try to assassinate her.

Taking this into consideration, I decided to set up some traps in order to stop any assassination attempts that were going to take place in the Amber Palace that we're staying at. There's no problem if they only target me, but I will NEVER tolerate them going after Auro and the others.

In the evening, given that my shoulders were stiff by the end of the meeting, I received a massage from Kanami-chan after we entered the bath. The way her beautiful hands moved was… fascinating.

In any case, by the end of the day, I was pretty tired, so it was a good chance to relax and… let off some steam.

Day 139

Early in the morning, just before we left, the assassins came.

While most of them were either caught or killed in the traps I set up last night, only one actually managed to get past them and make it into my bedroom. The man that invaded was wearing a mask and black cloths and had a knife that was dripping with a purple liquid. Still drowsy, I faced the man and went to seize him when both [Intuition] and [Release Trap] set off very violent warning bells in my head.

After blinking a few times, I noticed the reason why I was getting these warnings.

Apparently, something quite similar to a bomb had been buried inside of his body. What had saved us is that it seems that the bomb will not activate from a distance.

Well, this is certainly annoying…

For the time being, I couldn't kill him because the others would have gotten caught up in his suicide attack, I'm fine with taking a bit of damage, I'll just heal instantly, but I'm not willing to put the others in harms way needlessly.

In the end, I just used [Parasite] and forcibly made him into my slave.

Although it was my intention to immobilize him and withdraw information

with my finger, it seems that their free will and memories had been intentionally wiped clean. Most likely by using either magic or a specific magical item to manipulate their minds.

The rest of the men who were captured were in the same state, assassins that were more or less just meat puppets. I couldn't even give them orders, they were just empty shells.

I was able to take away their physical freedom by using my parasitic clones to make them into my slaves, but their minds were broken from the beginning and I don't have any reason to try and restore them. It's no use, so I'll just have to give up on trying to draw out any real information from these doll-like would-be assassins.

I inserted a clone into their bodies and removed the magical item near their hearts. In doing so, the assassin's chest burst open from the inside, that part couldn't be helped though.

The bodies of the assassins were eaten in their entirety and while I was at it, I also ate the magic item's explosive device as well.

Ability unlocked: [Burst]

Ability unlocked: [Human Bomb]

Although there was no way to trace their equipment back to the person who sent them, since I took the assassin's gear, I did secure a small amount of profit.

After eating them, I gave the Princess my report. She responded to it with,

"I see, if that's the case, we must find the culprits immediately. It'll be a good way to vent today's anger and dissatisfaction when we find them."

Well, I thought that the Princess would be able to determine the culprit immediately, but I guess not. Afterwards, since I have grasped the general strength of and general habits of the palace guards, I had them separate into groups and do basic training in shifts.

From this point on, I intend to strengthen each section a great deal.

Day 140

Today, the palace guards only had to do training in the morning since we're going to be heading out to the palace's surrounding town in the afternoon.

It's been decided that we'll go around the town with the Tomboy Princess as her guard detail. Because it's the first time most of the group have been out on an expedition, I took this opportunity to give each of them, including Seiji-kun, the day off.

They decided to look around the Royal Capital on their own, however, I don't know where the hand of an assassin might strike from, so I gave them instructions to stay relatively close to one another.

Just in case, I gave them each one of my clones because the clone's combat ability is reasonably high. So in the case something happens, they should be okay, most likely at any rate.

Basically, if anyone tries to kidnap or kill them, the clone should attack the enemy immediately so it should be fine.

Back to the main issue of the Princess' guard detail. The people from Parabellum are myself, Kanami-chan, Redhead, Auro and Argento, just these five people in total.

In addition, the Boy Knight and ten or so palace guards that have changed into normal clothes will be coming along as well.

This is our current group. Until now, dozens of guards have usually made up the guard detail, so this number has decreased significantly. However, well… it should be alright.

Like this, we walked around and visited several places. We didn't just explore along the main street, but also along the side streets and the back alleyways as well. All according to the instructions of the Princess sitting upon my shoulder.

One could get turned around very easily in the back alleyways. I observed the crime scene of a human abduction as well as crushing several assassins that I encountered. Well, given the fact that we found a well-known store, i'd say the day was well worthwhile.

Since I have a full day off in two days, I have decided when that moment comes, I will go to the Labyrinth City Purgatory for a short time. I also hope to find some dungeon alcohol as well as some decent monsters that I haven't encountered yet to eat them and gain some new abilities.

Yeah, I'm looking forward to it, I seriously can't wait….

Day 141

Early in the morning, before the sun had even begun to rise, the palace guards had long since begun shedding a lot of sweat and tears while training.

Because each of the palace guards' talents are of a far higher quality than the normal stock, only capable men defend the palace in which the Royal Family resides.

That being said, even though I have them guarding, it doesn't seem to be hindering the Tomboy Princess' personal guard.

After all, seeing as how only the Boy Knight is always nearby, even if the palace guards are detained, it shouldn't be a big issue, given the fact that they're all experiencing very fast growth.

In any case, the growth of the Boy Knight is quite remarkable.

One of the primary factors is a change in the weapon he's been using.

Recently, the Boy Knight has begun using a short spear rather than a sword.

When the opportunity presented itself before, I had recommended that he

try using a short spear instead of a sword.

So far, in terms of stopping other weapons, I had honestly not considered immediately changing to a new weapon on the spot.

Of course, he didn't completely give up his sword, still, he must have hesitated quite a bit on whether he should change from a weapon he'd been using for years to a totally different one.

However, as I thought, the Boy Knight's movements have greatly improved since he changed his main weapon to a short spear.

Even though I was going easy on him during our mock battles, he was still able to graze my ear.

I have no doubt that he has more talent in handling a short spear than he does a sword.

If the boy's handling of a short spear continues to grow, I'm secretly anticipating that when he is close to becoming a master, he may also become a key person in the [Book of Psalms].

However, supposing that that really DOES happen, he may become hostile towards us. I began to drool as I considered this, since I'm sure that such a person would be very delicious. Although I have yet to eat one, surely a key

person from the [Book of Psalms] ought to be quite exquisite. I seriously want to eat one, I really do.

Cleaning up my drool, I simultaneously thought this would be quite regrettable, though. Well, let's pray that it doesn't happen, primarily for the sake of the boy. Nevertheless, his future is something to look forward to.

On top of that, it seems that his current growth may also be beginning to influence those around him. Lured in by the boy's growth, both Auro and Argento were defeated by him. Since most of their training is done together, both of them appeared to be regarding him as their rival.

Since he's also doing his best, I have high expectations for the Boy Knight. It'll also be excellent stimulation for the growth of Auro and Argento. I think that it's quite favorable that there actually exists someone that can help motivate them into working harder together. The bonds forged between those two will certainly help them in the future.

Basic training ended in the afternoon and I went to soak in the Amber Palace's bath while I washed my body.

Afterwards, I considered doing some individual training for everyone, but was informed by the Tomboy Princess that she wanted us as her guard detail.

She apparently wanted to wander around the Royal Capital again.

While we were walking around, there was some more trouble, though I suppose I'll omit most of the details given that these occurrences are quite easy to deal with.

First, I destroyed a crime syndicate that specialized in abducting children, and I also killed several spies from foreign countries in the back alleyways.

It appears that there were other countries besides the Kirika Empire that the Sternbild Kingdom is allied with.

There's the East Grand Beast Kingdom which is governed by the [Beast King] Lionel, the Atarakua Demon Empire which is governed by the [Demon Emperor] Hyulton, the Lumen Holy Kingdom which advocates a human superiority policy, and so on and so forth.

Despite the amount of information that I obtained from the spies pertaining to bribes being given to nobles by wealthy merchants, I decided not to discuss it.

Although I defeated dozens of people, I ended up not gaining even a single ability.

Since the day was coming to an end, I returned to the Amber Palace with the Princess without any problems.

Given that tomorrow’s my day off, I will fly towards the dungeon first thing in the morning.

From there, I believe I’ll just enter it and take a good look around.

The preparations to enter the dungeon are perfect.

Day 142

Early this morning before the sun had risen I had already used my exoskeleton to fly to Purgatory, the closest Labyrinth City to the Royal Capital.

I arrived within thirty minutes and entered via the sky.

The reason I entered from above rather than through the gate is that it’s troublesome to wait and then have to use the 【Proof of Belonging to Royal Authority】.

What?

If it isn’t discovered, there won’t be any problems. Even if I’m exposed, I can just eat the eye-witness to destroy all the evidence. However, I entered the Labyrinth City from the sky without any incident.

I had my clone enter beforehand to receive a certain necklace, to which I immediately equipped. This necklace is the kind of magical item that normal adventurers possess. It has a simple design and is decorated with a small golden plate that’s attached with a durable cord.

It’s an item issued by the chief administrator that is in charge of overseeing various guilds and organizations which has the effect 【License to Traverse the Dungeon】.

It’s an item that is necessary for a non-human to be differentiated from the standard monsters while traversing the interior of the dungeon.

It was one of the items I was recommended to prepare back in the Labyrinth City for when I go into the dungeons so that I can avoid idle conflicts with humans while within the dungeon.

Of course I can still enter the dungeon without it.

However, there are a lot of benefits to buying the necklace.

To illustrate, if I have this necklace equipped and I’m caught off guard and killed by some adventurers while in the dungeon, the other party’s necklaces have a mechanism that will identify the criminals by emitting a red light.

It seems that even if the criminals get a new necklace or change out their old one for a different one, the necklace will still emit the red light.

Then, when the crime comes to light, the guilds use all their power to thoroughly investigate it and arrest the criminal.

The punishment they receive will vary depending upon the weight of their crime.

At any rate, apart from assisting a dying comrade, if someone kills a large number of people and steals their goods, following questioning, they will be subjected to capital punishment in the form of an indefinite period of forced manual labor.

Of course, there are loopholes, but since you can reduce the risk of being killed by other adventurers with this, the fact is that some degree of safety and sense of security can be obtained.

In addition, guild employees offer discounts at their stores, as well as various other privileges.

However, the biggest bonus seems to be the ensured safety that comes with it.

The reason that Minokichi-kun was attacked before seems to be because the necklace was destroyed due to his growth during his 【Rank Up】.

However, this is the troublesome matter, it costs five silver coins per person to acquire one.

Moreover, after exploring a dungeon, if you intend to enter another one, you need to pay five silver coins again to get a necklace followed by five additional coins for each dungeon.

From what I hear, every time you enter a dungeon, it’s necessary to have the necklace corresponding to that particular dungeon.

Even if I try to save money by carrying the same necklace into other dungeons, the effect wont work outside of the dungeon it was created for.

It advises you of this by emitting a pale light from the gold plate that it is adorned to.

It’s a very greedy business. To enter a dungeon costs around five silver coins. It’s a rather crafty practice utilizing the fact that one can easily earn money while traversing a dungeon

Setting aside the idle talk for the time being, I decided to enter the Mine of the Cyclops, one of Purgatory’s dungeons.

Mine of the Cyclops is a common type of underground dungeon that, from what I hear, has twenty floors.

The monsters are of intermediate strength that emerge from it’s depths.

Since it doesn’t go very deep, it’s the perfect challenge for a one day vacation.

Judging from the name, the image I had before entering was that of a rocky cave.

However, what I saw instead was a gloomy corridor that had paved floors and walls with the surface of the walls having a metallic color.

Although it may have been a bit difficult for a human to navigate the darkness, with my racial ability 【Night Vision】, it wasn’t much of a problem for me.

In addition, the few traps there were were quite easy to disarm since they had been installed poorly.

For being geared towards adventurers of intermediate strength, it seemed kind of dull.

While advancing, I felt a little unsatisfied of the difficulty.

On the ground, I found a goblin with dark skin who had all of the muscles on it’s body torn off by an ice axe.

It’s the kind of goblin known as a Mine Goblin.

Curious as to how it tasted, I immediately ripped off it's head with my silver arm and ate it.

As for the taste, it was so-so, I guess.

Although it wasn't delicious, I wouldn't go as far as to say it was an unpleasant taste. They were probably a common occurrence in this place.

I normally don't take a bite and then leave the body alone, however, I wanted to make several observations this time, so I left it to serve as an experiment.

If a person dies in the dungeon, it appears after a certain amount of time has passed, the body of that person will disappear.

This is something that I had Minokichi-kun's group check up on beforehand, however, it seems that I have indeed verified the truth for myself.

In addition, it seems that if I do not remove the body from the dungeon within this time frame, it will vanish even if I have it stored in my backpack.

I hear that the names of those who have fallen to the dungeon are carved into a huge memorial that's located in the public cemetery near the corner of the city.

In other words, I should eat humans and monsters not related to the dungeon before leaving the dungeon.

However, it’s strange that the dungeon’s monsters can become ingredients.

When your provisions start to run out deep in a dungeon, it seems you can cook the dungeon monsters that you kill and eat them.

For that reason, I experimented to determine to what extent you could bring dungeon monsters back with you.

With the one bite I’d taken still in my mouth, I picked up one of the Mine Goblin’s fingers with my right hand.

Then I changed the shape of my silver arm to conceal another finger within it and then threw the right leg into my item box and left the rest of the body where it was.

These are the results of the experiment.

When the body of the Mine Goblin disappeared, the finger in my right hand vanished as well, however, both the finger in my silver arm as well as the leg in my item box both remained.

I was a bit surprised about the leg in my item box, however, given the convenience of it, there were no complaints.

If I were to guess the reason for these results, it won't disappear as long as you take it inside of your body.

In the case of my item box, I'm just going to wager a guess that it's also considered a part of my body, though I can't necessarily prove such.

At any rate, with this, I'll have some souvenirs for Kanami-chan and the others to look forward to.

While advancing forward along the shortest route possible, of which I had check up on during my little experiment. I systematically killed any monsters I encountered, ate some of their flesh and threw rest into my item box for later.

Like this, I quickly descended.

Then, after around four hours had passed, I had arrived at the deepest part of the dungeon.

■ ■ ■

Two months ago, a dwarf by the name of Barth had met up with some

people he had been friends with for years.

There, they had said that there was an item drop from a certain boss that they wanted dearly.

It’s been one month and twenty-six days since it was judged that possessing the item would be beneficial in the future.

The five person party Iron Sword Hunters led by a female adventurer, entered the dungeon【Mine of the Cyclops】.

The dungeon has already been challenged many times with the aim of obtaining the boss item drop, but the stress had begun to build up.

In the lowest part of the dungeon where the boss could be located, in the safety zone where monsters don’t appear, Arty, the one handed swordswoman that had tied her blond hair into a ponytail, made a final confirmation of their strategy together with her four comrades.

“I’ve said it many times, but regardless, if Longsword Bellula shows up, Zack will defend against the frontal attacks while Barth and I attack it’s legs.

Brianna and Aisha will use their best attacks on its flanks and rear.”

“If Demon Songstress Hatchell shows up, Brianna and Aisha should unleash small attacks on her to keep her from singing. Zack will protect the pair while Barth and I move around behind it and attack repeatedly. Of course we need to deal with her mace from the start.”

“Finally, if Quake Hammer Gründ shows up, use your standard attacks while being cautious of it’s strong moves.”

“Does everyone understand?”

Arty and the others had already challenged and killed the boss monsters many times over, but they had not yet been able to obtain the desired item, there were two big reasons for this.

The first reason is that the item they wanted so desperately had an extremely low rate to begin with. If it was something that easy to obtain, it wouldn’t be worth all the effort they have put forth to obtain it.

As it’s a 【Unique】 class magical item that possesses an extraordinary ability, that fact makes it understandable that it is located in a special area.

The second reason is that there are multiple different bosses within this dungeon. There exists three types of Cyclops that gives this dungeon it’s name as well as comprise of the boss monsters for the Mine of the Cyclops dungeon.

Wielding it’s massive yet sturdy longsword as if it were a mere twig, the youngest Cyclops, Longsword Bellula.

Wielding a massive mace that uses powerful magical strikes as it’s main method of attack, the female Cyclops, Demon Songstress Hatchell.

And finally, wielding an enormous spiked hammer that can cause the very earth to shake and buckle when it’s smashed, the oldest and strongest of the three, Quake Hammer Gründ.

This is how the current state of affairs stand.

The magical item that Arty’s team desires to obtain can only be dropped from the strongest of the bunch, Quake Hammer Gründ.

The problem is that the chances for Gründ showing up compared to the other two is exceptionally low.

Therefore, the magical item that they wish to obtain is quite difficult to get.

While it’s rather frustrating, it isn’t something that can be helped.

“Yes, yes, we get it. So then, let’s just head out immediately!”

Having already answered Arty's question, the Werebear, Zack, a bear that walks on two legs like a human equipped with his tower shield, with a fitting depiction of a bear head stricken upon it, and his electrified bastard sword.

Quite contrary to his ferocious appearance, the bear actually harbors an instinctual fear of humankind.

He stands out everywhere given that he's covered in dense hair and has the habit of easily getting carried away.

"Now now, calm down little Zack. Don't get impatient on us."

After a quick admonishment on Zack, Arty turned towards the remaining three members of the group to check on if they were prepared.

As their eyes met, all three of them gave a bland nod that signaled that they were prepared and ready to head out.

Barth the Dwarf was equipped with heavy armor and a morningstar.

Brianna possessed the 【Conjurer】 job and was wearing dark purple robes with a magical staff in her hand.

Aisha was dressed similar to that of a Shinto priest, carrying a footman's flail in her left hand. She also had numerous support items such as holy water and other consecrated materials.

"In that case… Let's quickly…"

Just as they were about to enter the boss room, their strategy meeting/break was cut short as a thunderous roar caused the ground to shake as if the earth was falling apart.

The furious tremors assaulted Arty's group and the sheer magnitude of it caused them to stop moving on the spot.

The party of five people were forced to wait where they stood as it was as if the dungeon itself began to creak from the violent tremors to the point where it almost seemed as it it would collapse.

When the tremors finally stopped, the dust scattered about as if it was dancing. Small fragments of dirt and stone fell from the walls to the ground.

The tremors were so fierce that they lingered and reverberated throughout the dungeon.

"Wha… what the? … Did someone enter before us..?"

Arty had been the first to recover from the tremors and had immediately inferred from her many experiences so far to attempt to discern the cause of the sound just now as well as the shaking.

She looked up towards the heavens while holding her right hand over her eyes.

The behavior that she was expressing demonstrated her thoughts completely

-This just can’t be happening!

“Crap guys! This is bad, it’s the one we’re after too! Hell, they must be rookies. Do they seriously not know about doing a strategy meeting before you attempt a boss fight!?”

The Werebear Zack grumbled vexingly while he clung zealously to Arty.

“Now now you two, calm yourselves. Such things CAN happen on occasion. In the first place they may have entered without knowing anything, so it can’t be helped. It’s fine though, is it not?”

“Aisha, you seriously are carefree. If it wasn’t a rookie that came here this time, then we may not be able to even hunt Gründ!”

“Gagagagaga, yeah, it’s fine. Since it’s already happened, there isn’t any reason to get all steamed up.”

Arty immediately understood the cause of the disturbance, though the rest of her group didn't express their respective thoughts on the matter.

Naturally, Aisha went to comfort Arty and Zack who would become depressed as their long-awaited opportunity to strike Gründ may well have been lost. Brianna smiled wryly, even if she was a bit shocked while Barth’s voice reverberated as he continued letting out his hearty laugh of his.

Furthermore, it was more or less because these five had become close over time that they tended to speak to each other without restraint.

Though, there was a reason that the five of them reacted in this manner.

Fundamentally, it is common practice that before a boss room, there is a safe zone that you would pass through. Previously, if there is a party waiting, the other parties would queue up behind them to wait their turn at the boss. In short, this time around, someone didn’t wait their turn and had sniped the party’s intended target.

While this unique rule of adventurers isn’t law, it is rather a pact and common understanding that was created to avoid pointless grudges between groups adventuring within dungeons. This has become a near

ironclad practice within most Labyrinth Cities.

Though this may be the case, it doesn't mean that people must absolutely abide by it though.

However, it's certainly true that most adventurers that want to avoid any unnecessary disputes do in fact follow it.

The reason it works is that there aren't any real disadvantages to taking a break within the safe zone before challenging the boss.

Although someone might go out of order again like what happened this time, the grumbling of the five people quickly subsided.

You might say that they had simply grown accustomed to this situation. The fight had already begun anyway so there isn't any point to further complaints.

Hmmm… shall we go and have a little look? I'm curious as to what the outcome will turn out to be."

As expected, Arty, the party leader, complied.

She expressed a rather sinister smile given that her intentions behind

observing the outcome of the rookie's fight between the boss was obvious.

She wondered if the rookie wasn't aware of the rule.

She also wanted to know what kind of person they were as well. If possible she'd smile, but she seemed as if she had something on her mind that she wanted to say.

"I agree also. I want to see what kind of rookie they are anyways. Don't you agree Aisha?"

"You're right Brianna-san, if they get hurt then I'll need to heal them since life is so precious!"

"Kekekekekeke, me too! It's seems more interesting than sitting around here waiting for the next one."

"Well then, let's get moving without delay! Quickly, double time!"

Brianna, Aisha, Barth and Zack all offered their answers with enthusiasm.

Then, Arty and the other casually arrived in front of the doors to the boss room. Even though it hadn't even been a few minutes since the tremors had exploded throughout the dungeon.

Just as they reached the door, another tremor came through the huge doors to the boss room as the boss monster Quake Hammer Gründ swung his hammer down with a single blow as they made their entry.

In total, not even 10 minutes had yet passed since the boss fight had started.

However, the scene that they were forced to bare witness to within the boss room from the doorway was overwhelming. The scene that opened before them was something far too terrifying.

“Wha…. what… is this?”

As it stood, the other four people couldn’t even manage to offer an answer to the question Arty just whispered to herself. Their breath had been stolen from them as if the air within the room had disappeared.

Overcome with surprise, they were unable to avert their gaze anywhere else besides the scene. Their very consciousness locked to what was inside the boss room.

The five people felt the same thing, an intense, almost impossible fear.

The entire surface of the boss room floor was filled with a vast quantity of

fresh blood.

In the center of the sea was the Cyclops. It stood with only it’s right arm remaining as it was sobbing on the floor as it made a pathetic and desperate attempt to crawl away to safety.

The splendid gray beard of the Cyclops had been dyed deep red as it absorbed it’s own blood and readily began to cling to it’s skin.

Originally, the massive figure should be standing well over nine meters tall, however, it had shrunk quite a bit given that both of it’s legs had been brutally severed from the thighs and the left arm had been ripped from the shoulder.

From the huge wounds where the limbs had parted from the body, dark red blood continued to flow endlessly and soaked the floor.

In addition, the abdomen may have been cut open as a long section of entrails were spilling out behind him as he crawled on the floor. The contents growing further behind him as he went.

The scene that was most eye-catching, however, was the fact that Gründ kept crawling, as if he had long since stopped paying it any mind.

The fact is that until now, this Cyclops had nothing to fear, however, fear

was the obvious reason for Gründ to act this way. Gründ's single remaining eye overflowed with tears as a strange scream that sent a chilling sensation down your spine.

Quake Hammer Gründ existed in the memories of Arty's group as they had encountered him several times before.

What manner of adversary arrived before his mighty hammer to cause such a crushing defeat to the point this proud monster was in total terror? Especially when he used to have the appearance that gave the most imposing air, the current form showed no sign nor trace of that figure ever existing.

However, the state that it was in, where it had become so weak that it was trying to desperately escape was unnerving.

Finally, the sight of that… the Three-Horned Black… Demon, left the entire group including Arty in total terror.

Since there was such a great gap between Gründ and this Black Demon, they felt it even more so. This was no mere laughing matter. This Three-Horned Black Demon began to dismantle Gründ with a large sword as tall as he was while Gründ was still alive! The blade itself was rectangular similar to that of an oversized kitchen knife.

It took a moment, but Arty and the others began to put together that the being before them was likely a member of the 【Lord】 Species. Since Arty and the others had associated with some Lords in the past, they understood that their combat ability is just as exceptional as that of a Dragonewt.

However, it's far out of the ordinary for it to have been able to finish off the dungeon boss and begin dismantling it before even 10 minutes had passed. Nevertheless, although Arty and her group no longer were dazed in fear as they had been before, they were unable to move their bodies.

Instead, they looked upon him with great respect, harboring feelings of admiration because of his great strength. The reason for this is that every member of Arty's group held a firm, near religious, conviction that those with the power to defeat mighty enemies within dungeons, whether through violence, wisdom, or any other such methods similar to financial power should be the ones to dictate what rules to follow and when order is challenged.

To stop admiring the owner of such overwhelming power out of simple fear was unimaginable.

Still, why did they fear it? The reason was quite a simple one.

"This meat has quite a crunchy texture as I chew it... ahh, it becomes even more delicious that way… This rich blood has a strong taste… yet… it makes it easier to swallow… ahh, I want some more… Well, that certainly

sets it… this Cyclops is fairly delicious.”

Arty, who possesses 【Job - Chivalrous Thief】, part of the Scout job’s tree of development, has abilities that excel at scouting out an enemy, she had surely heard the mutterings of the figure before her.

So more than anything else, they had a natural fear of this Three-Horned Black Demon.

-(“”””””He’s… He’s eating it while… it’s still alive… guu..”””””””)

The Cyclops, Quake Hammer Gründ, was without a doubt the strongest boss monster within the Mine of the Cyclops dungeon.

However, it had been one-sidedly dismantled while still alive, it’s flesh and bones eaten.

“Urrgh…”

Arty, somehow, through great effort, had managed to suppress her rising nausea, enduring it without expelling the contents of her stomach.

When people dive deep within a dungeon and the food supply they had prepared in advance runs out, they will often eat dungeon monsters to avoid

starvation.

Arty and the rest of the group had also done this many times. In addition, there are some special and unique 【Jobs】 that can be acquired that make it necessary for you to eat monsters in order to continue living. That’s why it’s quite sensible to collect data on the many monsters you defeat.

This was their reason for not having an aversion to eating monsters, however, it’s not possible to counteract poisons so that they wouldn’t die without using special cooking methods.

That’s why it’s probably smart to refrain from eating Insect-type monsters, monsters that have grotesque appearances, as well as several key other types.

However, as one would expect, it’s hard to eat a target’s meat in front of their prey while it’s still alive.

Because the Cyclops is technically classified as both a 【Giant】 and a 【Demon】, it has some degree of intelligence, although typically not much.

Because of this, Arty’s party judged that the creature shouldn’t be able to live in that current state, nor should it be possible to consume its flesh.

(“”””””This is too cruel…”””””””)

Though Gründ's right arm and leg that had already been cut off could not be found, they had just entered as the Black Demon had cut off the left leg, the meat that he had just been eating that seemed delicious to it.

Given this, it's likely that the right arm and right leg had probably already been eaten.

Predicting this, Arty, as well as the rest of the party began to unconsciously tremble a little.

However, as they quietly watched the Black Demon eat the flesh, bones, and consume the fresh flowing blood of the left leg that had been nearly the same size as the Black Demon's body, in it's entirety no less, their feet and minds seized with fear as they became quite nauseous.

Then, the Black Demon raised the large sword overhead with one hand, and while taking the last bite of the leg's remains, swung down at Gründ's remaining arm.

The speed of the downward swing of the being was so fast that Arty and the rest of the party could only look on at the aftermath of the attack. Gründ's arm danced through the air as a fresh spray of blood spewed everywhere.

Gründ let out a scream of such strength that the very reverberation

destroyed what remained of his voice.

Though, the Black Demon seemed to take no notice as he caught the freshly caught arm in the other hand and began eating once again.

It was a truly gruesome scene to behold, combined with the speed in which the flesh and blood was being consumed, it surely should have been more than what his body could ever have hoped to take in, leaving Arty and her party with a surreal experience.

However, reality hadn't changed at all, they weren't dreaming, this was reality. Arty and the rest of her party continued to stand there, witnessing as Gründ was being systematically being divided and devoured right before their very eyes. It wouldn't be long before there would be nothing left of the former proud beast. At most, they guessed he wouldn't last even fifteen more minutes.

The sheer extent of Gründ's vitality was his own misfortune now as he would continue to survive until his head was eaten. As what would be expected, Arty and her group all felt a strong sensation of similar to that of pity for the beast. However, as the item drop from Gründ that had been desired by Arty and her party was retrieved by the Black Demon, it finally seemed to notice their presence.

As it's gaze met theirs, their minds went blank for a moment. Instantly, an unpleasant sweat covered their whole bodies as their teeth began to make

loud chattering sounds.

The sheer, overwhelming terror they now felt was throwing their very thoughts into total disarray. Although their minds were spinning at an unbelievable speed, they could not determine what they should do in this situation.

During this time, the Black Demon was silently and steadily approaching where Arty and her party were standing. Aisha collapsed first, unable to withstand the Black Demon’s unimaginable and overpowering aura.

Although Brianna had extended her hand as a reflex to support Aisha as she began to collapse backwards, she herself couldn’t generate the strength necessary to support both bodies and collapsed with her.

However, because Brianna had reduced the force slightly with her last remaining strength, the impact was reduced enough in such that their heads didn’t hit the floor hard, avoiding any noticeable injuries.

Despite this fact, no matter how much time passed, there was no sign from the two that they were getting up. Instead, neither moved at all.

If you had observed the scene closely enough, you would notice that Brianna had latched onto Aisha tightly and pretended as if they were dead.

Since their bear's opponent was a complete and utter Demon, she thought that he would decide to escape rather than defend them.

After that moment, Zack had already begun to instinctively place his equipment on the ground and lied on his back after determining he had no chance to win. He then exposed his belly as his race's sign of total submission.

For a moment, Arty was about to ask if Zack had any pride at all, but she could fully understand his feelings.

Arty's own hands and feet clattered as she trembled and she was already having trouble just keeping herself standing.

The resolution that Zack showed in surrendering without a fight was probably due to the fact that his strong instincts as a Beastman compelled his very body to do so.

Barth was the only one still standing upright without moving. His splendid beard surely seemed to not just be for show to have such bravery in this situation.

They even thought, "As expected of the oldest among us," however, it was only due to the fact that the little dwarf had already fainted, his small stature and short legs supporting him and not falling over.

Noticing this she thought, “Come now, that’s too pitiful!”, she wanted to revoke her previous impression of the old dwarf.

Although Arty thought she had discarded her tendency to escape from reality, as expected, her mind had reached her limit as the Black Demon closed the distance enough to reach out to her with it’s hand.

(“... I’ll… be killed…”)

As she thought this, the image of the crying and pitiful Gründ flashed into her mind with vivid detail.

The meat was carved using such precision that he wouldn’t die even as his head was picked up and was being devoured.

He had been desperately trying to crawl away until each of his limbs had been severed, his guts spilling out all across the floor in his futile attempt to escape.

He had stayed alive, while being consumed until the very end where it’s final sight was the two, cold eyes, of the Black demon as it was eaten.

This chilling image overwhelmed her mind.

(I'll… be… guuh…. eaten…")

The Black Demon opened his mouth a little, his sharp fangs made themselves visible. Their resemblance was that of white metal with red staining the interior.

His dreadful voice overflowed without any connection to his intentions. It was at the same time that she had finally lost the last of her strength in her legs and lower body to the point where she softly sat down on the spot, her abdomen became wet as a certain degree of freedom had overcame her senses.

Understanding what had just happened, her face began to burn with the sheer shame of what had just occurred, but her fear was suppressing any of these feelings as her body refused to get back up.

The reason for that is that the Black Demon's eyes were locked to her own, her consciousness was solely fixed on him.

"Hmmm? Tired? Well…. ah, here, this will help."

The Black Demon lightly said something, then he placed a high quality piece of cloth that was both long and narrow across Arty's shoulders with his large, highly trained hand.

Arty had long since lost the ability to process the situation, her mind frozen and blank as her eyes could no longer even follow the shape of the figure speaking to her.

The words of the Black Demon echoed through her mind as it was as if all time had frozen, her mind simply couldn't process what had just happened.

It wasn't until the Black Demon's presence had completely disappeared that she slowly began to regain her senses.

"Wh…. Whaa?..... What in the …. world…."

Arty muttered this, but not even she heard herself say it.

■ ■ ■

The Cyclops boss monster that resided on the lowest floor was quite big, so it seemed that it would take some time to eat it's entire body.

For that reason I decided to cut off the limbs and eat it while it was still alive so that it wouldn't disappear on me.

I used the magical item 【Giant's Long-Lasting Carving Knife】 which I

had purchased at the Royal Capital to dismantle the Cyclops and gradually eat the delicious and crunchy flesh.

Ability learned:【Earth Shaking Hammer】

Ability learned:【Giant’s Bloodline】

I had gained two new abilities. Even setting 【Giant’s Bloodline】 aside for now, the 【Earth Shaking Hammer】 seemed as if it would be fairly useful.

However, the abilities are not really that particularly important to me this time. After I had completely devoured the Cyclops, the following broken into my vision.

【“Frontier Psalm” 【Hammer Cyclops】 has been Completed by Clearing Conditions: 【Solo Kill】 【Flawless Victory】 【Continuous Living Predation】】

【Achiever Yatendouji has been Assigned the Rare Skill 【Three Steps of Destruction】】

【Achiever Yatendouji has been Assigned the Rare Skill 【One Who Eats the Living】】

【Achiever Yatendouji has been Awarded the 【Unique】 Class Magical Item 【Demon’s Smithing Hammer】】

【Achiever Yatendouji has been Awarded the 【Grand Ordeal Breakthrough Celebratory item 【First Attempt Restricted Deluxe Edition】】】

Hmm, it seems that if you kill a dungeon boss under certain conditions, it’s possible for the 【Book of Psalms】 to record the kill.

By the way, when I saw the entry 【Solo Kill】 I decided to contact Minokichi-kun via his cuff to find out if he had cleared it as well. However, he couldn’t comprehend it since it seems the times he saw something similar to what I was describing, he wasn’t completely conscious and thus had stated that he completely forgot about it.

It seems that it was displayed for Minokichi-kun as well though. Ah well, there’s no changing the past. It’s not an urgent matter either.

After I killed the Cyclops, as I was about to leave, I noticed that there were

five people, both men and women standing in the doorway with their gazes fixated in my direction. The people in the doorway was an odd bunch, there was a human women that only had a single arm, she appeared to be a swordswoman and the leader of the group from her appearance.

There was also a young Werebear holding a large shield.

An old Dwarf with a most splendid beard.

A human woman, probably a conjurer given her equipment.

The final member was another young human women that seemed to be some form of battle cleric.

I guess they were a party that had intended to challenge the boss room next after me, so I decided it would be best to keep the exchange brief with a small greeting.

As I approached though, the young female cleric fainted. As she slowly fell backwards, I noticed that she showed the whites of her eyes.

The female magician besides the young women embraced her closely in order to protect her as she fell, but it seems that she was too fatigued to support her as well as the two fell together to the ground. Although this one seemed to still be conscious, she didn’t try to get back up, I wondered why

but simply assumed that she was also exhausted.

The young Werebear had removed his equipment and lied down, showing me his stomach. Though in all honestly I hesitated to touch the belly of the unfamiliar Werebear. Though his fur had gotten a little dirty, it still had a pleasant feeling similar to that of a fluffy pillow or sofa.

The old Dwarf was standing at attention, perhaps out of respect for me given that I was alone. However, it seems that it was too much for the old Dwarf as he quickly fainted as well. Even as he fainted from probable total exhaustion due to his old age, he still showed an extreme level of discipline as he maintained his stance even as he had fallen unconscious.

Only the female leader had remained standing, though her limbs were trembling. Each time I took a step forward her body flinched in response, her eyes beginning to tear up as I drew near.

I didn’t do anything bad, however, I suppose it was a combination of exhaustion combined with my presence. I suppose since they were quite tired already, the shock of my short warm-up and snack was a bit much for them.

The moment I tried to call out to the female leader, she immediately sunk down and became incontinent. Since it wasn’t any use, I just quickly passed her. It didn’t seem like anyone would pursue me for now.

Although her friends were the only ones in this place besides me, I thought she’s probably be embarrassed like that so I handed her a towel made from my thread as I quickly greeted her and made my way out.

Well, in the end they didn’t say so much as a word and I made my way in the opposite direction in order to return to the surface.

I had no problems getting out after that and I flew through the sky again in order to return to the Amber Palace from the back streets. Today, I only gained two new abilities from the Cyclops, though, since it was a good harvest, I’d say that it was a day well spent.

Day 143

While in the middle of training, a messenger from the First Queen came again. I don't really understand why, but I was invited to a tea party for noble women.

Honestly, in addition to the fact that I didn't want to ever meet the Queen again, I wondered why she would think to even dare invite a non-human male like me to a party intended for noble women.

Kanami-chan was also invited, but I didn't particularly find this as a plus factor. Not giving any real thought to the Queen's intentions, this time I decided to prepare an explanation.

"The Princess is my employer, not the Queen. Therefore, if the Princess declines, then I'm afraid I must decline as well."

I thought it would be easy to persuade the Tomboy Princess by baiting her into thinking I wanted to go. However, I apparently became the secret sponsor for the tea party, so I was unable to escape. With that, I attended the First Queen's tea party with the properly dressed Kanami-chan.

I must say though, it was fine weather to hold a tea party in the Royal Castle's garden. From what I could gather from the eyes of the women present, around 50% either hated or feared our presence, 40% were fine with us and the remainder had thoroughly been intoxicated. I expected that

some would be scared, but I surely didn’t expect that almost half would actually be fine with my presence.

The intoxicated look in the eyes of the First Queen’s personal guards and some of the other ladies as they looked in my direction unnerved me though. I just gulped while the others were clearly drooling. It was … like a slaver watching it’s prey... Were those 10% the same as the Queen… just the sheer idea of it somewhat scared me…

At the very least, the tea party was normal, even though there was only brief conversation. Since there was no harm done, I decided to give up any objections and dealt with it to the end.

Day 144

We did our usual training in the morning and individual training and/or sparring in the afternoon, and most of the day ended up being spent like that.

Even though I did find myself busy moving my clones behind the scenes, I think it’s fine to enjoy a peaceful day for once while I’m here.

The Minister, the head of the Nobles Faction who wishes to remove the Tomboy Princess is likely to try something bigger soon since right now it seems that she’s gotten herself embroiled into something complicated.

Well, at least before that storm, I plan on taking things nice, quiet, and slowly.

Today’s synthesis results:

[Helmet Splitting] + [Heavy Axe Attack] = [Heavy Axe Helmet Splitting]

[Job - Light Warrior] + [Job - Light Swordsman] = [Job - Light Sword Warrior]

Day 145

Today, I decided to begin gathering up all of the palace guards and began a joint training session.

Since the Amber Palace guards were heavily supplemented with my clones, there wasn't a problem in mobilizing them.

If there did happen to be an intruder, then I fully plan on getting to have a delicious snack in the shadows.

Joint training was done in pairs with the palace guards facing off against members of my group. The fights were brilliant, but it eventually ended in a total victory for my group. As expected, compared to the palace guards who are only human, we had various races that granted us far more adaptability.

There was a huge difference in the strength between them, so i'd say it was an inevitable outcome more or less.

Afterwards, it was decided that we would hold a banquet for everybody. The other day I had eaten a Cyclops which gave me the ability to generate them through [Lesser Summoning: Giant] so I ended up treating everyone to some Cyclops meat. Since the Cyclops meat was actually a surprising group favorite, I intend to have everyone back home have some when we return.

The Tomboy Princess had prepared some high quality alcohol for the banquet as well, and as always it was delicious. There was quite a large variety of alcohol and as I finished each drink one after another, even I began to become a bit drunk. There was even some that were as delicious as Elven wine.

Day 146

Apparently there's a big event known as the Tournament of Heroes that will be starting in ten days.

In the afternoon while I had been escorting the Tomboy Princess around, the Royal Capital was quite lively with preparations. Everyone was in high spirits as they made their preparations with large smiles on their faces.

I was quite interested as to what sort of festival it might be. After all, it will be the first festival i'll have seen since coming to this world.

At that, by all means i'd certainly like to be able to participate.

Day 147

A war broke out today.

Well, even if I say that, it wasn't between the Kirika Empire and the Sternbild Kingdom but rather between two other countries.

I'm not exactly sure what will happen in the future, but since war broke out in a distant country, the Kingdom shouldn't be affected.

After the Princess' request is complete, if the war is still going on, there may just be some good money to be made over there.

I'd like to wander the world in search of things that I've yet to see, feel, and taste. I'm particularly interested in some seafood.

Ah, and there also appears to be a dungeon located at the bottom of the ocean. I'd enjoy giving it a shot to try and dive in some time.

After training, we played a simple card game with the Tomboy Princess using some homemade cards until it was late at night.

Kanami-chan, Redhead, Auro and Argento all seemed to have fun, so it's fine.

Day 148

To the north of the Royal Capital, there is a huge circular structure known as the Colosseum.

Usually, slaves, criminals, lower class people captured in war, people sold due to their debts, and other such peoples chosen for various reasons were forced to become a 【Gladiator】 and kill one another there.

This is the place where people gather to bet and watch these shows.

Having been soaked in human blood, the soil was a reddish-brown color with fragments of teeth and smashed metal fragments from damaged weaponry buried around. There was also a huge limestone pillar in the ground that had countless scars inscribed in it from all directions.

Now…. for some reason or another…. I'm here standing in the middle of it...

The reason appears to be that by a royal decree that had been given to the Tomboy Princess, prepared by her political rival, the Minister.

Put simply, I'm a major hindrance to him and it seems that he wants to get rid of me here. In any case, the Minister arranged many powerful enemies in order to defeat me. With tens of thousands of spectators filling the surroundings, the air was actually quite tense.

■ ■ ■

『Thank you for waiting, everybody! Today’s main event will finally begin!』

The voice of the host resounded within the Colosseum, filling it with roars of madness and cheers.

The number of spectators within the Colosseum was at a record high due to the Tournament of Heroes which is held only once every three years coming up.

On top of that, the black Apostle Lord, of whom rumors have been going around the Royal Capital, has been reserved for today’s main event.

There were so many people that even though there were seats enough for over sixty thousand people, the number of guests forced to stand in the passages continued to increase.

Even the private rooms that were exclusive for the use of nobility were full.

Although each of the sixty thousand talked quietly, their sheer number meant that the noise was quite loud to the point where it had become audible enough to be heard by the surrounding neighborhood.

Using a magical item, the host of the event increased the volume of his voice, allowing his lies to reach every corner of the Colosseum, bringing an even greater excitement

The lines he spoke contained information about the participating warriors with several light jokes mixed in between.

Taking no notice of it, the master and servant who were sitting within a private room built for the royal family’s exclusive use were listless.

「Princess, is this alright?」

「Is what alright?」

With shining platinum hair and a charm similar to that of a fairy, the young princess, Rubiria was quietly sitting on a large and most luxurious chair.

She had her neck tilted in response to the question of the Boy Knight standing by her side. With a small sigh, the Boy Knight spit out his doubts while applying pressure in the middle of his forehead with his finger.

「I do not think it is a good idea to show the capabilities of Master.」

「Ah. Don’t mind, don’t mind. It is only fitting to show Aporou's strength

in this kind of event.」

The Boy Knight still wore a worried expression as Princess Rubiria took out a small red fruit from the basket at the side of a small table near her, wearing a bewitching smile that most certainly didn't suit her age.

The red fruit, known as a Ruble, is a fruit that has a shape quite similar to that of a grape.

The Ruble is known for commonly being used to produce juice and wine. If it's fresh and you lightly wipe the surface with a cloth, then it is perfectly fine to eat one without any problems whatsoever as well. It's a very high quality fruit that has a unique sweet yet sour taste that fills the inside of your mouth with flavor.

Also, since it's a fruit that has a certain detoxifying effect which can prevent one from dying if one's been poisoned, many of the nobles and royalty quite enjoy eating it. It's also quite easy to tell when poison is present as the fruit's color will change in response to foreign material.

Part of the reason that it holds such popularity is because of the fact that it can be carelessly eaten in quantity without the need of a taste test. The first one was picked up and eaten by the Princess Rubiria.

「Umufufufu. As expected, Rubles are truly delicious.」

Princess Rubiria then showed another ecstatic and bewitching smile, lovely enough to enchant those around her.

However, the Boy Knight had become used to seeing it and had remained largely unaffected by it.

「Princess, are you sure about this? No matter what happens?」

「Don’ t worry. Believe in me, Mc.」

The Boy Knight bowed his head while Princess Rubiria laughed loudly, displaying her usual and quite famous tomboyish appearance.

「I do not think my trust in the Princess is a problem. No matter what happens, I will follow you till the end. The only question is, how will the others react?」

The Boy Knight, McCool Say, who holds a great deal of respect for his Master, felt uneasy and wondered what kind of influence the first would have on the Apostle Lord’s future.

He was convinced without a shadow of a doubt that the upcoming fight would have repercussions for all of the people that surrounded Princess Rubiria.

「This is an opportunity to become known like a giant blaze. I am just worried about our war potential.」

「Umu. McCool’s uncertainty is likely unnecessary. Hopefully.」

With that, the Princess, Rubiria, stopped talking as she ate another Ruble while sipping from a cup filled with the juice of freshly squeezed Ruble juice.

After that, she faced McCool who had been standing besides her and smiled fearlessly.

“With them, it’ll be fine.”

Normally, it’s quite difficult to truly believe such a short explanation without any evidence or further details.

However, Princess Rubiria’s words and her fully confident eyes were far more than enough for McCool, dispelling the uneasiness that he felt. Well, even though things may be quite troublesome with an embarrassing master, she herself just shrugged her shoulders like it was nothing. With that, McCool once again seemed confident as he stood at attention.

“If the Princess says so, there is nothing left for me to say. I shall simply and sincerely wait for the results right here by your side.”

“Umu, do as you see fit.”

McCool and Princess Rubiria exchanged a set of smiles with one another just as the voice of the host became louder and announced the movement into the next stage.

『From the South Gate, the Colosseum is proud to present the 【Gladiator King】, Liger Bazette! As you know from his record, he has won 500 matches and remains undefeated. Once more, in this battle, the soil may be covered by his enemies’ blooming flowers of blood!』

At the same time as the host had said these words, the large iron grate of the South Gate made a large grating sound as it opened and a large man came out of it.

The proud figure before the audience was approximately two meters tall,boasting two very powerful arms almost as thick as the average human’s torso. Both of which were covered with countless scars.

He was wearing light armor made of light green Dragon leather. He had a great sword nearly as tall as he was attached to his back with two swords hanging at his waist. His reddish-brown hair was largely unkempt and his yellow pupils were similar to that of a beast, sending out an intimidating air to his surroundings. He gave off quite the oppressive atmosphere, his strong warrior’s spirit causing those at even a large distance to tremble.

Being the strongest, he's been at the Colosseum the longest as well. He's also the man who has piled up the largest body count. Liger Bazette is an existence similar to that of a tiger, craving an unquenchable quantity of blood.

『Continuing on, from the East Gate, a wanderer coming from the far east, the 【Master Swordswoman from an Unknown Land】, Kaede Sumeragi! Despite being the only woman, she is capable of using the ōdachi she wears at her waist to slice lumps of metal and use flying slash attacks. So please, be careful about heckling her! 』

Coming out from the Eastern Gate in a relaxed manner was a beautiful women wearing her own ethnic equipment which was based on red and black tones. Her glossy raven-black hair was tied together while she had an ōdachi, which was barely even known by the local people, firmly affixed to her waist.

Her black eyes softly gazed at the surroundings, and although she didn't have the same overpowering presence as Liger had, one could still feel the strength coming from her calm yet beautiful figure.

As Kaede walked with her unique footwear, the cluttering sound of her footsteps made were quite elegant. This alone was far more than enough to attract the attention of everyone within the Colosseum, regardless of their age, or sex.

A sharp sword made of ice with a substantial and abnormal cutting ability, this is what defined Kaede’s existence.

『Next, from the west gate, it's the famous 【Lesser Dragon】 making an appearance, a Wyvern! This Wyvern was captured from the Jadar Mountains. What sort of fight will the Jadar Wyvern's wild temperament produce this time?! Please, watch closely!』

At the same moment, the West Gate was opened. A large, 9 meter long Wyvern violently jumped out. To prevent it from flying and escaping, the membrane of both wings had been torn apart and cut to pieces with shackles placed on its neck and limbs.

16 strong men were struggling to hold onto the chains in order to suppress it’s violent rampage, only to barely keep it under control. The Wyvern then violently swung around, killing several of the men as they were brutally sent flying into the walls.

The Jadar Wyvern had dark, blackish-green Dragon scales and a particularly violent temperament. It had poisonous spines on its back and tail with a very strong body.

To capture one of these creatures is difficult, even for an entire army. However, one of the Sternbild Kingdom’s Four Symbolic Heroes had already captured 30 of them. The most troublesome of them to handle being

the Jadar Wyvern Leader, which they had decided to put to use inside at the Colosseum.

『And finally, for the most anticipated participant! From the North Gate is the rumored person, the Mercenary Group Parabellum’s Leader, 【Silver Arm】――』

However, just before that, the Jadar Wyvern had suddenly shaken off the men holding onto its chains and charged towards the North Gate.

Using its short, yet thick, hind legs which were developed for the sake of taking off and landing, it scattered dirt around as it crept forward. It kept its forelimbs which were missing the wing’s membranes.

It scattered it’s toxic green saliva as it growled angrily, showing it’s strong desire to catch it’s prey. The overwhelming strength it displayed could easily overpower something weak.

The Jadar Wyvern headed for the North Gate, whose iron grate had already opened. From there, a single Lord with patterns engraved on his black skin, a silver arm and three horns had slowly emerged. The Lord had a silver halberd in one hand and was wearing a pair of loose pants.

As for other articles of clothing, though his upper body was totally bare, he wore a bracelet on his right hand and had iron rings attached to his ankles.

That was the extent of his equipment. Being barefoot and without anything similar to body armor, he looked too defenseless and seemed to be foolishly risking his life in the Colosseum.

Then, all of a sudden, the battle had begun as the loud cheers arose from the entire Colosseum. Despite the fact that the Jadar Wyvern’s big frame was charging towards him, the Lord did not take even a single step.

The audience rose from their seats as they both screamed and cheered at the sight, watching the events unfold with great excitement.

While keeping an eye on the situation, Princess Rubiria muttered something to herself.

「Do not disappoint me, Aporou. After all, this will be good publicity for you, as well as your mercenary group, won't it?」

Even though it wasn’t the case, as if responding to Princess Rubiria’s words, the Lord, Aporou, with just a mere five meters left between him and the Jadar Wyvern, finally moved.

From the view of the spectators, the figure holding the halberd had just suddenly disappeared. Just as suddenly, the massive figure of the Jadar Wyvern was split in two, accompanied by a high pitched noise.

The Jadar Wyvern was cleaved perfectly right down the middle with vast amounts of blood and ping entrails gushing out of it’s body. The two halves slowly parting down the middle.

The source of the Jadar Wyvern’s death was the water spirit stone found within the tip of Aporou’s halberd, which, when swung at a ultra-high speed, created a large, highly pressurized blade of water from the edge of the axe head.

Even though it had bisected the Jadar Wyvern, it did not lose momentum and continued further, approaching Liger, located all the way on the other side of the arena. The water blade showed it’s power by leaving a deep scar on the ground as it flew towards it’s other target.

“Tch ---- UUUUUUUUUOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!”

Momentarily stopping himself to gauge the speed of the water blade, Liger then gave a courageous shout to raise his spirits as he unsheathed the greatsword hanging from his back.

At the same time as the water blade closed on him, he activated his combat 【Arts】 and met the attack head on.

【Combat Art - Brandy Brawn】

The large sword, which he had swung suddenly emitted a red glow, the temperature of the blade having risen by a great degree. With the burning sword having the same power as the water blade, the collision between the two forces was enough to stop the latter.

The water blade evaporated, turning into steam from the immense heat which filled Liger's vision with white. Waving around his large sword, the white fog instantly dissipated from the violent winds produced, returning his vision to normal.

By that time, however, Aporou had already closed the distance and was in front of him.

Due to him suddenly covering dozens of meters without so much as a sound, Liger's response was greatly delayed, creating a lethal opening.

"------Tch!"

Liger held his breath as he prepared to die, knowing that he was fully unable to either avoid or defend from the blow in time.

However, his face was filled with astonishment as his eyes believed that it was impossible.

For many years, he reigned over the Colosseum like a king, yet now that very same king was about to die, being killed in only two blows so easily.

It was something that no one, not even himself had thought possible.

While stuck in that state, like having caught delicious prey, a ferocious smile appeared on Aporou’s face as he swung his halberd at a speed highly impossible for human eyes to see in order to kill Liger.

The outcome of victory and defeat between the two fighters had been decided.

Yet, one person stood between that outcome.

Kaede, holding her ōdachi.

“Cherrrrriiiaaaaaaa!!”

【Combat Arts - Fan Flash Storm】

Spreading out through a wide area like a paper fan, an innumerable number of high speed slashing attacks similar to the ōdachi attacked Aporou.

However, all of them were blown away by his halberd and silver arm.

Innumerable sparks and the sound of screeching metal echoed throughout the Colosseum, disappearing before anyone became fully aware of it.

“----Tch!”

Kaede clicked her tongue upon seeing one of her attacks easily stopped and immediately advanced towards Aporou, placing all her power into her next attacks.

Despite exchanging blows for only several seconds, any ordinary person caught by their attacks would have found themselves killed several times over.

However, both Liger and Kaede instead simultaneously widened their distance from Aporou.

This was followed by gasps and excited shouts from the breathless spectators who had been watching.

『W-What on earth is happening!? The Jadar Wyvern went berserk and then was killed in a single blow. The 【Gladiator King】, Liger, was about to be killed but his life was saved at the last moment by Miss Kaede! Everything is, ah, overwhelming! Simply overwhelming!! 』

With the excited voice of the host, the cheers from the spectators became even louder.

Such was their enthusiasm in the Colosseum that the tremors being created felt like small earthquakes.

Amongst everything, Kaede called out to Liger, having decided that they would both need to fight Aporou should they hope to survive.

After all, that, was the right decision to make, and yet…

「Aporou, that man. Has he been hiding something that interesting? 」

A black aura of sorts had begun to seep out and cloak over Aporou's entire body.

Based on what she could see, for an existence whose strength is even greater than the undead monster class, perhaps it was a physical or magical ability that increased one's resistance, is what Princess Rubiria thought.

The two figures then approached Aporou, who had by that time been fully cloaked in the black aura.

"Just amazing, isn't it…"

McCool had unintentionally voiced his feelings of admiration.

From their point of view, the Gladiator King, Liger, and the 【Master Swordswoman from an Unknown Land】, Kaede, were both comparable to 【Heroes】 and 【Great Heroes】, since they moved with speeds that surpassed human limits and held exceptional sword skills and Arts.

“--------RA!”

Liger, with a whirlpool of blue flames swirling around his sword, swung his weapon downwards, creating a violent gust of wind.

The strike cut deep into the ground, scorching it as if it had been ripped apart by the greatsword itself, the blue flames spread out and blazed forth like a roaring wave.

The wave of blue flames closed into Aporou who seemed like he would be engulfed by it.

However, a large wall of earth suddenly rose, blocking the flames and dispersing them.

As the wave of flames were dissipated by the earthen wall, he smashed it with a kick, forming the earth into spheres that then flew towards Liger at

great speeds.

Liger received some of the attack with the flat of his great sword while avoiding the rest.

Enduring the bombardment without suffering a single hit, Kaede, who had been waiting behind him, stepped forward and moved to attack Aporou.

“I see… Certainly, it is a little bit different from what I imagined, but it makes their situation more favorable.”

Those were McCool’s frank impressions, of which Princess Rubiria agreed with.

The ōdachi located at Kaede’s waist, the 【Waking Dream of the Evening Blossoms】, excelled in fast movements, and of which one particular 【Art】, the 【Blinking Temple Blade】 which is said to be impossible to see, even for a 【Master Swordsman】.

She pulled her ōdachi from it’s sheath with the same speed as the sound her blade produced as it cut through the air, forming a clear trajectory meant to decapitate Aporou.

However, the attack was nonchalantly fended off by the silver arm clad in the dark aura.

Traveling at the speed of sound and capable of cutting steel like mere paper, Kaede believed that the silver arm would only delay the inevitable, and had not expected that a single move from it would be able to stop her blow in it’s entirety.

Following this shock, Aporou struck her directly in the abdomen with his knee.

With a sound similar to that of a small bomb exploding from her chest, Kaede’s delicate body was blown away like a ragdoll. While rolling around defenselessly, she began vomiting blood.

As if not to let the opportunity be in vain, Liger approached from behind and swung the flat of his greatsword downwards. Without looking behind him, Aporou performed a roundhouse kick directed towards the wrist that gripped the handle of the greatsword, causing Liger to panic and let go of his sword as he tried to evade.

As a result, the kick missed the wrist and instead, struck the handle of the greatsword. The impact broke it apart and sent it and the rest of the sword flying into the distance.

Having lost his main weapon, Liger quickly unsheathed both of his two swords hanging from his waist. Using 【Combat Art - Cross Slash】, Aporou’s sides were simultaneously slashed from both directions. Both

swords let out a red glow as they failed to cut his flesh, creating instead a high-pitched sound that scattered sparks around. Both blades simply slid off the surface of Aporou's body, completely unable to hurt him. The reason for this was due to the protection of the black aura that was covering his entire body.

Realizing that no attacks could hurt him, Liger quickly tried to bid a retreat, only to find himself a single step too late. As he jumped back, the handle of the halberd struck his left side, bending from the impact as if in slow motion, his body was sent back flying several meters before it finally made contact with the ground, flying back several more meters before finally stopping.

Although Kaede and Liger both possessed excellent recovery abilities and could still fight, it was impossible to win against Aporou, who remained in perfect condition.

The difference between them and him was simply far too great. The number of spectators who had come to the Colosseum to see the fight continued to watch as they remained speechless. With that, the fight reached an unexpected conclusion.

■ ■ ■

Within the Colosseum, it appears that a battle royal between four different figures, all coming from four different directions simultaneously, was about

to begin.

In the beginning, I wanted to wait for someone else to move first and see what happens, but it seemed that I had to be the one to start the battle because of the advancing Wyvern.

I just decided to bisect it with a strengthened water blade from my halberd with 【Hydro Hand】, while using 【Aeromaster】 and 【Gravity Law】 to accelerate it further.

I accidentally aimed it at the shabby man who was introduced as the 【Gladiator King】, though he did actually manage to endure the strike.

Well, I suppose it would really have been dull if it had just ended there.

Afterwards, due to unexpected events, the Female Samurai worked together with the other guy and so, I decided to keep them company and play around with several of my abilities as a nice warm-up.

After roughly 30 minutes had passed, I managed to become aware of their overall abilities. After that, I decided to disarm the two of them and ask them to become my subordinates.

Though he was strong and had plenty of uses, I was not in particularly interested in the 【Gladiator King】 but rather the Female Samurai, the so

called 【Master Swordswoman from an Unknown Land】. Ah, let me just say that, though she is quite the beautiful woman, it's actually not the reason I was interested in her.

In this world, excluding me, there seems to be other people who came from other worlds as well. For example, in this country it is said that the 【Sage from an Unknown Land】 is one such person.

Apparently the 【Great God】 that controls ≪Space-time and the Star Ocean≫ is the one responsible for such things. When someone is invited here, the main body's soul is copied from the other world and reproduced in this world as a new existence.

Their new body which the 【Great God】 had prepared, becomes the real thing. Therefore, even people who had no capability to fight would, as a result, be able to do so and become like the Female Samurai.

Honestly though, I wanted to try and eat her. I was really interested in how she would taste and wondered what kind of abilities I'd get from a body prepared by a 【Great God】. Of course, there are reasons why I shouldn't eat her. Given that she is a visitor from another world, commonly referred to as 【Otherworlders】, it looks like we are somehow able to perceive each other's existence.

I aimlessly approached and closed the distance, vaguely knowing the direction that I'm heading to. If the Female Samurai, currently on the ground

in a great deal of pain, accepts my offer, then I'll just eat the next Otherworlder that I encounter.

Regrettably, the 【Sage from an Unknown Land】 in this country has very close ties with the Princess, so it' ll just have to be necessary to look for another Otherworlder.

Well, since they usually like to attract a large amount of attention, it should be easy enough to gather information on them. If there are others who came to this world from the same one I did, then they could even have an 【ESP Ability】.

Personally, I' d love to gain 【Teleportation】 so that I could move around quickly, but I really shouldn' t get my hopes up too much on that one.

For now, I can only hope that an Otherworlder I can eat appears early.

At any rate, after seeing me, the Female Samurai became seriously frightened. Probably sensing that she was in serious danger, she willingly accepted my offer.

The Gladiator King did as well. As for him, his reasoning for joining was just, "Well, I lost and it sounds interesting." Heh, I'm starting to like him, it was a good and simple answer. I decided to quickly give them a modest welcome.

Cutting the Wyvern’s meat using my 【Giant’s Long-Lasting Carving Knife】, I fried it in a large pan while sprinkling it with cooking sake purchased from the Labyrinth City’s locals. To top it off, I included some 【Sakura's Rock Salt】 which I had gained from the Cyclops I had killed back a few days ago and ate the cooked Wyvern steak with the others.

Since I began to crave alcohol as I ate, I also drank some dungeon liquor. While enjoying the feast that I had started at the center of the Colosseum, the spectators in the private rooms for nobles began to mumble and gripe, though they did become silent when I glared at them.

This Wyvern meat, which I’m eating for the first time is insanely delicious. It can’t really be compared to chicken at all. Instead, it’s more like a high-quality beef with a marvelous taste, just like that of a rare gem. Of course I did munch on the scales too.

Ability【Refined Wyvern Scale】learned

In terms of stats, I kind of expected that the Wyvern would be vastly inferior to Dragons. If that really is the case, then it will be worth looking for the latter in the future. While there is still quite a bit of Wyvern meat left, I decided to eat it later along with the others.

Since I didn’t want my item box’s existence to become known, I had the Gladiator King and Female Samurai drag one half of the Wyvern’s body out of the Colosseum while I carried the other. After that, the Tomboy Princess

came over to the waiting table and proudly said, as her facial expressions constantly changed,

“Well well, you’ve done quite well. However, to conceal such an interesting ability is simply unacceptable, he he. Come here, let me touch you for a moment.”

Well, it was just as usual.

I placed cuffs on the ears of the Gladiator King and the Female Samurai. Finally I can appoint escorts to both Argento and Auro. Later, I intend to give them both their patterned Cloaks.

Day 149

It’s said that there are four main Heroes known as the Four Symbolic Heroes that exist in the Sternbild Kingdom, comprising it’s greatest military force.

Well, I’ll give a brief introduction of each:

The first Hero, the 【Hero of the Quivering Water】, Freed Acty. He’s a former farmer, a youth in his twenties. He has just your run of the mill average face with no particularly noticeable features except for his clear light blue eyes. His weapon of choice is a long sword that he wields with both hands. The blade itself is called the ≪Pale Sword of Flowing Water≫ with the name ≪Feinschubel≫.

The second Hero, the 【Hero of Darkness】 is named Alrich Tin Agba. She is a noble from the Kingdom and is in her late teens. Her hair is unkempt and a pale white color that suits her haggard face that ends up giving her the look similar to that of a sick person. Her personality is quite sadistic and is coupled with her favorite weapon being a multi-knotted whip called the ≪Ruler’s Birch≫ with the name ≪Contra Nine Tails≫.

The third Hero, the 【Hero of Iron Rock】 is the widely known Gascade Barossa Meloi, another noble from the Kingdom. He is the eldest of the human heroes at the age of 40 and is a veteran of the Kingdom’s military serving as a general. His most recognizable feature is that his head is growing bald as time progresses. His favorite Weapon is a huge hammer

called the ≪Hammer of Isenbal≫.

The final Hero, the 【Hero of Fortified Wood】 so named Hoof Ain is a female elf who had given up on her hometown and has lived a great many years. Being the only demi-human hero amongst the four, she holds an eternal beauty. Suited to her race, her favorite weapons are the longbow ≪Furian’s Layered Tree Bow≫ and the poisonous blade ≪True Steel Poison Sword≫ with the name ≪Tenfu Fuura≫.

That’s the general description of those four.

Truthfully, there was a chance that Avenger might have ended up joining them and turning the group into the 【Five Symbolic Heroes】. This would most likely be due to the fact that he is also a part of the Book of Psalms.

However, those waves of destiny have long since been laid to rest.

At present, 3 of the 4 Heroes seem to be moving around the Kingdom.

One is busy challenging the Age of the Gods dungeon and it’s creatures with some comrades.

Another happens to be subjecting a monster that is currently devastating the lands and the third is trying to overcome a difficult trial recorded within the Book of Psalms.

The fourth remained within the Royal Capital having been placed in charge of the new system for the shifting of guards within the Royal Palace.

For some reason, the Hero of Darkness, Alrich Tin Agba, the hero that stayed within the Kingdom, began stalking me yesterday.

While we were training, I noticed her observing from the rooftop of the ≪ Garnet Palace≫, the one next to the Amber Palace.

Her haggard face and sickly complexion gave her quite a peculiar atmosphere… something akin to a horror film perhaps.

Even though she was watching from a distance using her abilities as a 【Hero】 to hide her presence, she was detected with 【Sense Area】.

Honestly, I don’t intend to question her intentions if she means no harm, but for right now, that’s quite difficult to do.

In the future, I should be careful to prevent the full extent of my abilities to be revealed.

Day 150

Currently the main force that is opposing the Tomboy Princess is the 【Nobles Faction】 led by the Minister. Currently, this faction holds the greatest influence within the Kingdom.

The nobles hold approximately 70% of the Kingdom's territory, the remaining 30% is governed by the King.

Though there are nobles that support the Royal Family and the king, there are many who belong to the Minister's faction.

For this reason, there is discord and conflict occurring in many places and in some areas there are people dying from starvation. Though, this isn't caused by a famine but rather as the results of over taxation and strangling the economy in certain regions.

Currently, the Sternbild Kingdom is slowly being corrupted from the inside.

Would it even be a good idea if I said something about it?

For now I decided to circulate the details that I've unraveled at a later date.

This morning, the corpse of Gilbert Isla Bardera, the Minister and the now former leader of the Nobles Faction was discovered.

The murder was revealed to have been caused by a new type of poison and at present there seems to be no cure available. The arrival of a new poison frightened many people, causing them to argue amongst themselves.

This is the reason why there is such a hostile atmosphere currently within the Royal Castle, making the whole environment tense. It’s unclear what the repercussions of this incident will be, but a big disturbance is likely to occur soon enough. I seriously want to take advantage of the trouble that’s coming so I can enjoy eating something delicious.

To be precise, amongst other things, I primarily have my sights set on eating 【Heroes】, 【Great Heroes】, and 【Otherworlders】.

I nearly started drooling from just imagining the taste they would have.

The old Minister had a subtle taste… I want to get rid of that bad aftertaste...

Day 151

Well, a day has passed since the Minister was poisoned and died.

In that time, just about every faction and organization within the Royal Capital and otherwise have begun making big movements, but none of them have made any moves that have greatly affected us.

For now, if I were to summarize the current information that I've gathered about the Minister's assassination, it plays out like this.

First, the Sternbild Kingdom is unable to determine a culprit, or have any real idea as to whom the perpetrator might be. The frenzied investigation is being carried out by an actual excellent intelligence unit, though even with that, they can't seem to make any progress on the matter. The only information they've really managed to gather is stuff that just about anyone could easily get with just a little looking around.

That more or less includes:

The Minister was murdered in a private room within his own private residence.

There were no traces of a conflict or resistance.

None of the alarms installed within the complex were set off. Each of them were magical in nature, spread throughout the entire building.

The first witnesses to the scene were the chief butler and the head maid

that he had brought with him.

The cause of death was by a special new poison.

Furthermore, the poison that had been used to assassinate the Minister caused purple pustules the size of small beans to form all over his body. The resulting effect was a partial necrosis.

It seems that by the time he was discovered, there was already a distasteful smell in the air and the corpse had become pretty grotesque.

Because the poison seems to be a new type, the [Magic Pharmacist] and [Alchemist] of the royal court's payroll have gathered samples from the Minister's corpse for study and research. This was so they could use the samples to find the poison's cure with all of their might to prevent further instances of poisoning within the nobility, but since only a short amount of time has passed since they began, there still isn't one.

However, according to the old man serving as the head of their medical department, the poison is so dangerous that they aren't even sure they can develop a cure, no matter how much time they spend on it. This was the gist of the report he had submitted to the king.

Well, to sum it all up at once, aside from the culprit, there is no one else with an antidote or means to produce one. Meaning everyone else that gets exposed to it besides the culprit would die from it.

For that reason, with the exception of that very same culprit, who was capable of assassinating the Minister who was heavily protected by powerful elites, it doesn't look like anyone can be saved.

In that case, those who are being protected by bodyguards far inferior to that of the Minister's will be completely incapable of resisting, all according to the whims of the culprit.

They'll be poisoned and become rather unsightly corpses. It's possible that entire families may be massacred during this time as well. It seems that this conjecture of the court caused a majority of the nobles to believe, "It's probably going to become just like that," which then planted a seed of terror in their minds.

Including nobles of influential families within the Nobles Faction led by the Minister, the number of people who couldn't sleep at all last night was probably fairly high.

After one night passed, there were already plenty of pamper bodied nobles with bags under their eyes. Their hollowed cheeks and bad complexions quickly began to be the common sight within many groups in the Royal Castle. Many tended to avoid even making eye contact out of paranoia.

There were even people who used their poor health as an excuse and secluded themselves within their residences.

There were also those who moved about with an unchanged and total confident attitude. These, however, were only this way because they were either nobles from the [King's Faction], strong bodied military men from the Nobles Faction who held confidence in their mighty constitutions, or others that are cunning and sly like a snake.

These people, however, make up the strong minority in the capital though. After looking at the overall situation, it seems that there aren't a whole lot of nobles that actually support the King or the Royal Family.

One of the causes for this might just very well be the Tomboy Princess being a possible throwback, but I'll be setting that aside for now.

Finally, some of the Minister's assets have disappeared. That's it.

Since the opportunity has presented itself, I suppose this is the perfect time to sum up the Minister's history.

Several decades ago while the Minister was still young, he had been known as a brave general, the [Silent Destroyer General] by the neighboring countries. He seemed to have been a part of many battlefields.

His first campaign took place in the May of his fourteenth year where his strength was realized during a battle with a neighboring country. After he had defeated the enemy commander in a duel, the enemy nation became a

vassal state of the Sternbild Kingdom.

Since then, he continued to expand the Kingdom’s territory with his sheer resourcefulness and military prowess. Even though he had his share of both victories and defeats, on every battlefield he only left the best possible results with great displays of bravery and valor.

Decades after his first campaign, he had expanded the Kingdom’s lands, saved countless lives of fellow soldiers and brought blessings to the people.

However, it seems that sometime during his forties during a skirmish with the Republic of Druvan, he received critical injuries in a battle in a swamp surrounding a deposit of the rare Mark ore mineral along with other desirable resources. These injuries forced the once great warrior and general to resign from his position as a General.

The Republic of Druvan has since then ceased to exist after being divided up and absorbed by the Sternbild Kingdom and Kirika Empire.

The battle had cost him his left leg below the knee, his right thumb, right ring finger, right pinky, among other various deformities.

Afterwards, he became a tactician, making it partially believed that he would not leave the battlefield during the remainder of his lifetime. Though, as many had expected he moved into politics.

Sometimes he would put together important bills that would greatly influence the future of the Kingdom. Other times, he forged treaties with other countries that were highly advantageous to the Kingdom.

It was like this that he outlined his political career. He laid the groundwork, got his activities and achievements acknowledged, and obtained his current position in a very short amount of time. After that, his very position was unshakeable for a long time.

In short, his influence was in no way inferior to even that of the King's. Like that, the Minister left behind many great achievements. He's even the one responsible for getting the Kirika Empire to form an alliance with the Kingdom on equal terms, despite the Kingdom even being slightly inferior in terms of economical and militarily strength. Well, doesn't really matter anymore, since he's dead.

Telling the whole story of how such a capable Minister became the Tomboy Princess' opposition would be a serious pain, so I'll just skip over that for now. Basically, he had a major change of heart for various reasons that are too complicated for me to really care about.

All that really matters is that with the Princess' strongest political rival, the Minister, out of the way, the Kingdom has reached a critical juncture. Though, one might say that it's a good thing.

You could say… that the time for us to get some good money has finally come.

Now then, putting that story aside, the Minister had a number of little hobbies, such as telling his war stories of the past, training the noble knights and generals, and playing Army Commander's Advance.

Army Commander's Advance is a type of board game similar to shogi and chess in such regards. since the things like army type and terrain effectiveness are taken into account, it also actually serves as training for giving out precise commands smoothly during actual combat.

It seems that he had also gathered a collection of magical items with combat abilities over the years. I gathered approximately 300 of these. Just thinking about how much a magical item with combat abilities can sell for is enough to gather just how extensive the Minister's assets had been.

Among these collected magical items, most of them were [Rare] rank, with a few dozen [Unique] rank and a handful of [Ancient] rank items.

It's a pity that he hadn't gained any [Legendary] grade items, but all of the items here were more than enough. They were all hand-picked by the wise Minister himself, so they're all first-class magical items.

Aside from those items, there were also a few hand-picked gems to

decorate the Minister's private chamber. They were all being protected by a large number of anti-theft devices that were layered on top of each other dozens of times over using some sort of technique.

They were being securely managed. However, all of the anti-theft devices were destroyed and everything disappeared, that included all of the magical items. I wonder… where exactly did all of those magical items go?

There were many that had been very interested, but compared to the Minister's assassination or the current political situation, the disappearance of a deadman's assets wasn't very important to them. They will probably never even end up getting mentioned during discussions. Even if it somehow surfaced to the topic, it wouldn't get pursued anyway.

Indeed, just as I planned. I smiled wickedly as the items took up nearly 300 slots in my item box displayed inside my head. Aside from that… nothing special has happened.

We just spent the day training without incident.

Day 152

Another morning of training was completed, so I decided to wander around the Royal Capital today.

When I did so, I was swarmed by people interested in joining Parabellum. Based on a quick head count, I'd guess that around 60 people have gathered.

There was a soldier who wore typical light leather armor, a tiger eared Beastman, a warrior who uses a short bow, a young warrior equipped with a sword, flail and buckler, and quite a few other people. The people gathered here were from various races and possessed various jobs and skills. I didn't go out yesterday, so I didn't understand the situation at first. Apparently, a group of adventurers and mercenaries were waiting around the Amber Palace where we have been staying.

Having waited all day long, the group reacted to my presence and quickly scrambled in the hopes of joining first. In the end, the commotion attracted the attention of the curious onlookers who then formed a huge mob that one could barely hope to move around in.

Since I thought it might be a problem if I try and get through them, I screened the crowd for suspicious people. In doing so, I was able to catch several hidden assassins that were prepared to target me, all of which I plan to eat later.

It will probably end up being bothersome if I stayed in front of the gate for too long, so I decided that a rough interview would be conducted by the large fountain at the central park.

I let a small smile leak out as I thought that from behind, the figure of the applicants moving in succession looked just like a line of spot-billed ducks waddling along. Naturally, this caused me to smile wryly. Still, it really would be troublesome if they all ran off at once.

It also seems that a good number of them went off to call their companions from other places as we moved. I resigned myself with a sigh and hurried to the destination, since I didn't want the number of people to increase any further or else it would be troublesome to listen to them all.

By the time we arrived at the central park, the number of people seemed to have swelled up well past the original number. If I had to give a rough estimate… sigh… it’s probably nearly 200 people.

Since it would be sad if I expected something interesting only to find not a single soul of note, I tried to keep my expectations as low as possible. For my mood’s sake if nothing else. Ah, by the way, even though an interview is important in general, nearly thirty people who saw the process lost their interest and left.

Every last one of them was really no different from the others. Even though there were a few who seemed useful, it felt like it was a general waste of

time. I didn’t know how long that line would get, but as time passed, the number of people just kept getting larger and showed no signs of getting smaller.

To be honest, there wouldn’t have been any issues even if I didn’t take in a single one of these people into our group.

The base already has a good number of members as it is, and with the new Goblins and Hobgoblins being born at a constant rate, the population's growth rate is under no real threat of slowing down in the future.

There’s plenty of war potential in reserve, though it’s necessary to train and teach them until they are usable.

I can improvise and supply more than enough war potential with my hordes of black skeletons in less than ten minutes. On top of that, the Black Fomorians can be used during the daytime without any problems.

Even though it’s a bit late to do so now, in the future, they might be able to help out in many ways in terms of defense. After giving it a slight bit of thought, I made up my mind to at least finish all the interviews.

At the same time, it would be beneficial to immediately find talented people who could help out in various operations. There should be many that could prove useful at the very least. I have to at least figure that there’s probably

plenty of trouble waiting to get mixed up with me in the future as well.

Saying that, I decided to present a single condition to the members who had gathered in order for them to officially join Parabellum.

It was something along the lines of, “All you need to do is win 3 rounds during the Tournament of Heroes.”

The Tournament of Heroes is a fighting tournament that's often held these days, which is set up for the general populace to compete and show off their strength. Occurring once every 3 years, it’s a large event that is held in the Royal Capital of the Sternbild Kingdom’s Colosseum. This year marks the 50th time it’s been held.

From what I can gather, the event is always advertised on a large scale, with posters and banners spread all around the Royal Capital. The Royal Capital is currently filled with far more vigor than usual, as the number of human visitors and participants who brought their own gear increases.

Due to it being the 50th occasion, the number of members from the nobility and royal families of other countries has also increased. Naturally, civil servants were negotiating with the Chivalric Order of Knights from other countries for their safety, so there’s probably going to be a large number of representatives from them participating in the festival as well.

In other words, there's a small possibility that I can actually legally eat the Heroes and [Great Heroes] from other countries. Just the thought of this made me hungry. I kind of have the expectation that Heroes and Great Heroes taste like bacon. Just thinking about the unknown quality of the meat, the hardness of their bones, the taste of their blood, and the abilities that I could obtain… It all just makes me drool at the thought. Sigh, can't they arrive any faster?

Returning to the tournament's explanation, it's said that several thousand people participate on average. The reason why so many participants gather time after time is that the champion and the top 16 all receive great prizes. The premium prizes given out to the winners change each year, but based on my investigation of previous years, it seems that various goods are included as prizes, such as the following:

【Dragon's Wisdom】, a well known Dragon slaying blade made from materials taken from a Dragon.

5 war golems made from rare magical metals along with plenty of spare components.

A Thunder Dragon Spear for training beasts made from the scales of a Lightning Wyvern. It seems to have been capable of producing thunderclouds.

Disclosure of special information on a number of concealed dungeons within the Sternbild Kingdom, as well as Royal permission to enter them.

A large amulet containing a jewel that substantially raises one's vitality.

The list goes on and on.

They’re all quite extravagant rewards. Personally, along with the information on some dungeons, I’d really like the location of the Lightning Wyverns and of other rare ingredients to be mixed in the package as well.

Since the meat that I had from the Jadar Wyvern was really good, I wanted to have some meat from other Wyvern a well.

I expect that the amount of money that gets awarded to the 16th through 9th place participants will be 5 gold plates, eighth to fourth will get 10 plates, with an additional 5 gold plates from the third prize to the Champion’s prize. The Champion of the tournament will probably get 25 gold plates.

It’s so much money that I could probably live my entire life without working or… probably in my case, several years of enjoyment. That is, of course, if you don’t spend it extravagantly. Well, that’s my thoughts on it at least.

Winning and advancing to the 3rd round in the festival in itself is enough proof that you're strong. Hundreds of people will lose in the 1st round, since it's a battle royale format that’s designed to drastically reduce the number of applicants. In addition, like it or not, there’s the possibility of them simply being sacrificial pawns in the future. However, even sacrificial pawns need food, which is an unnecessary burden when you compare it to my black skeletons who live idly and don’t need to eat a scrap of food.

When I presented the condition, I had the thought that they should resign themselves to death and was quite pleased with that. I became motivated

as those interested in joining scattered while showing various reactions. Once the interview session ended, I went back as the time had come for us to wander around while we went shopping, as we had actually planned to do from the beginning.

Today’s dinner is grilled steak taken from the remaining meat of the Jadar Wyvern from the other day. With a high temperature, I burned the exterior brown to trap the juices in the meat. I then seasoned it with special salt from a dungeon and a homemade sauce procured in the Royal Capital which gave it a nice smell.

When I took a large bite, the irresistible juices began to overflow as I repeatedly chewed it. I have to say, my appetite has risen greatly these days, I ended up enjoying 5, no 6 huge Wyvern steaks when this happened:

Ability learned: 【Wyvern Eye】

...What the hell?

Why did I suddenly get an ability?

It’s already well past the time limit for that, so I wonder why...

...Wait, now that I think about it, it’s actually strange that I was able to learn abilities from the Red Bear. The time limit might have actually passed back then as well, but I had gotten so confused after that fight that I can’t be certain.

If that’ s the case, then maybe my 【Absorption】 ability may have changed when I came to this world. While speculating about this with serious confusion, I decided to investigate the cause. After encountering such a strange occurrence for the first time, I probably won't manage to get any sleep tonight...

Day 153

Today I'm currently far from the Royal Capital, observing it from a fairly high place it kind of looks like a little speck. Looks pretty surreal with the morning sun illuminating it from this distance.

Well anyway, taking advantage of yesterday's event where I actually got a new ability when it shouldn't have been possible, I ended up consuming a huge amount of Wyvern meat.

Though I had eaten some with Female Samurai and the Gladiator King in the Colosseum, there was still a sufficient amount left over.

There was easily enough to feed over a dozen people for a day.

However, I didn't end up gaining any new abilities even after I ate all of it. So, because that happened, I reluctantly decided to lead everyone over to the Jadar Mountain range to secure some more fresh meat.

I made up my mind in the evening yesterday and for the next several hours, the Skeleton Carriage rocked as we traveled at high speeds.

The hazards on the road were either dealt with using the Skeleton Carriage itself or the several of my clones as we eventually arrived on a hillside within the danger zone of the Jadar Mountains.

If one looked close enough, the peaks even had snow piled atop them.

Soon after our arrival, we began our hunt for Jadar Wyverns and other monsters that inhabited the area. Well, even though the Jadar Mountains are famous for being the birthplace of the Jadar Wyverns, there are still quite a few other monsters that live here as well.

For example, there's the Cockatrice that lives here. It's body is as big as a human's with a large snake-like tail covered in scales. It has magical eyes and a beak that carries the petrification attribute. It also has dangerous poison claws that will immobilize you with so much as a single graze. The meat is said to be delicious once it's been trimmed and prepared just right.

It seems that it's one of the dishes served during the Royal Family's parties, with fried Cockatrice seeming to be one of the Princess' favorite foods. However, it's because the Cockatrice is actually a genuinely powerful monster class, it is not a meat that will often appear on the market place.

The second example is the Naga.

The Naga are a species of demonic women with the lower half of their bodies being that of a serpent. Many of them are beautiful women that possess a similar nature to the Dryad and Succubus in which they will seduce men of other species in their attempt to squeeze out their life energy until they've completely dried up and wither.

The fools drawn in by their beauty are strangled to death and swallowed whole once the dirty deed is complete and their vitality extinguished. Because they're a form of demi-human, they have the capacity for having heightened thought capacity. Since they pertain to the same family of snake as the Night Viper, they in particular pertain to a considerably troublesome class.

However, it's a given that their nests often contain certain materials that fetch for a really good price. As such, many reckless merchants may make unfavorable trades just for the sake of opening one of the nests.

Now, the third example that we encountered were the Bearbees.

The Bearbees are magical beast class of insect. It's an actual bear that has six legs like a bee, two sets of four wings, venomous spines and a partial exoskeleton. It possesses strong armor, a powerful stinger with an even more vicious poison, as well as the ability to fly that leaves it just as alert and agile as a bee.

In all honesty, it's actually quite the frightening opponent. However, though it possesses a number of traits that makes it similar to that of a bee, it has a relatively low population in comparison to it's counterpart.

One could say that this is a relief, but it does seem that their hives actually hold a quite decent number of them at any given time, so that's most likely

just a hollow feeling of relief…

Even with those mentioned, there's still quite a significant number of other monsters in the area as well. The Jadar Mountain Range is a treasure trove of ingredients and monsters that I haven't eaten yet. All of which are high level and will grant everyone a large amount of experience.

I decided to do as I pleased and moved independent of the main group, leaving the command of the rest of the group to Kanami-chan.

Since the Tomboy Princess and the Boy Knight actually forced us to bring them along, I made it expressly clear to Kanami-chan to ensure their safety.

They'll probably even be safe, even in the case of a Jade Wyvern attack, there's still the Gladiator King and Female Samurai that joined a few days ago. Since they were deemed equal to a boss-class Jadar Wyvern, there shouldn't be a problem regardless of however many normal Wyverns appear.

If it actually becomes hopeless, a simple message can be sent through the ear cuffs and I can arrive to bail them out.

After deciding on that, I started hunting on my own.

There wasn't much time available today, so I activated 【Phased Array

Radar】 and 【Sense Area】 simultaneously for an even greater effect.

With this, I was able to perceive quite a large area around me, making my search quite easy.

There were several reactions nearby, and I disregarded any smaller ones in order to search for the monsters mentioned previously.

I made sure to erase my presence as I ran through the mountains in search for my prey. In the end, it only took a few minutes to find the target I desired the most.

The first thing I discovered was a 【Bearbee】 hive.

From the looks of it, it’s already a form of fortress since it’s built into the bare rock face of a sheer cliff.

I’m uncertain as to how they managed to make it, but the ashen hive was approximately 100 meters in size. From the outside it looks like a large hemisphere, giving me an unpleasant feeling as I was looking at it.

The Bearbees that were flying around nearby seemed to each have a designated role. There were Bearbees working to capture monsters for food. Other Bearbees were charged with caring to the young within the hive.

Flying the surroundings of the hive were Soldier Bearbees wrapped in an especially large and quite robust exoskeleton that covered their whole body to guard against invaders. In the depths of the hive, there was a sole Bearbee in idle slumber. However, as a whole, the population definitely seemed to be low for such a massive hive.

All put together, there were only around 80 of them at most. This number even included the Bearbee children, putting the total fighting force to only around 50, or at the very most 60. I was surprised to learn that there were only around 80 of them for a den that's well around 100 meters in size, though it could just be possible that the size is necessary for their large bodies.

At any rate, being able to discover one of the Bearbee hives right off the bat is a good sign. That's because the Bearbee honey is a high quality ingredient that's extremely rare on the marketplace. The young will also eat it, similar to bee larva.

Though Bearbees will kill monsters and carry the bodies back to the hive to eat, the majority of them have seeds of a certain magical flower implanted within them. Their bodies act as flower nurseries so that the beautiful flowers can bloom. It's these flowers that store the honey that they generate.

I did actually feel a slight sense of admiration towards the Bearbees that went through such an extensive process to cultivate their own food sources.

Well, rethinking my initial plan of action, I did initially want to do beekeeping near our base.

As a result, my plans changed and I turned the Bearbee Queen and the young into Familiars.

The procedure was easy, I just burned some of my paralysis poison, turning it into paralyzing smoke. I then manipulated the flow of the air, filling it with the poison.

I then just had to wait for a bit until I could confirm that those within the hive couldn’t move anymore.

Afterwards, I entered into the depths of the hive and turned the one’s inside into Familiars.

As a result of this venture, I picked up the Bearbee Queen that boasted nearly twice the normal size of a Bearbee, five youths roughly the size of a goblin, ten workers to build their new hive and finally six warriors to defend the hive.

After gathering the ones I wanted, I killed and ate the rest while they were nice and fresh. Though the meat was good in itself, their unique habits caused the flavor of honey to permeate into their limbs.

I specifically enjoyed those.

Ability 【Beekeeper】learned

Ability 【Bee Sting】learned

It’s probably a good sign that an ability related to beekeeping was gained. Moreover, given that I was able to secure a large quantity of the valuable slightly red honey, I considered these events as a good thing.

When I sampled a mouthful of it, I unintentionally shouted because of how it overwhelmed my senses. In addition, I felt a sudden rush of power overflowing from the core of my body.

As for this honey, once I have established the beekeeping at the settlement, I want this placed on our dining table by any means necessary.

Though the taste is quite strong, it makes fatigue vanish and you get a sudden surge of energy. It also seems like it would be a product that the Elves would die to trade for.

After collecting the monster materials from the huge hive, I roughly cut up and dismantled the hive. Since the room of my item box is nearly unlimited for storing similar items, I could put the entire hive into my item box.

I collected it because I thought there might be something it could be used for. The outer walls of the hive were quite strong.

Afterwards when I had resumed my search, a group of Vorpal Bunny attacked. They seemed to just be the next-rank of the Blade Rabbit species with a sharp blade drawn in a gradual arc from their forehead. Something of a whip grows for their tail.

Well, they certainly turned out to be a troublesome species because they can approach silently and attack their prey with tail whips and attacks from their bladed heads. Because they were a hindrance, I slaughtered them quickly.

Though I didn’t gain anything, I did enjoy filling my stomach with some tasty rabbit skewers. The head’s blade in particular had a nice crunch similar to a rice cracker.

Next, I encountered a Rock Golem. In order to eat the rabbit skewers, I sat on a nice rock for the remote location I was in. Turns out, it was a Rock Golem that had buried more than half of it’s body into the soil.

Fundamentally, Golems are creatures that certain humans that possess a specific job can create through a supply of magic power and a ritual.

They also exist in remote places like the Jadar Mountains too where the land is full of vitality and the Magical power flows strongly throughout the land.

Wherever the right materials and circumstances occur, a Golem can be formed.

At any rate, that’s the case for Golems that are created by humans.

Golems that form in nature are almost always strong embodiments of the characteristics of the land they are birthed from.

When they’re created, if a volcano is nearby, then they form a Lava Golem, if a glacier is nearby, then it’s an Ice Golem, if it’s a desert, then a Desert Golem, and so on so forth.

The common traits for the Golem species is that they can live for a very long time and can easily repair themselves through the materials of their environment, such as soil and stone.

They’ re a famous monster that wanders human-made dungeons. Of course, there are also many within the ≪Age of the Gods≫ dungeons,

which were created by the gods during the ancient times, each drawing from their respective powers and the dungeons that they are derived from.

These Golems are typically far stronger than the usual natural or human-made Golems.

This isn’t just because of them being reinforced by the dungeon's “Monster Reinforcement” trait, but also because the Golems have suitable bodies that match the high level environment.

Anyways, the Rock Golem was approximately five meters tall which puts them eye level to the average Troll.

Trolls seem to slightly surpass Rock Golems in terms of agility, but given that Rock Golems don’t feel any pain and both offense and defense is higher, they are still quite strong. They are made from stone after all.

The Rock Golem’s general attack was a large swing, it would be painful even for me if one managed to hit, though not close enough to be fatal though.

Since it was a hindrance to my meal, I viciously and quickly smashed it into pieces to collect it’s magic core that forms the body around it.

Similar to a slime, the magic core is the vital part to Golems. If I break or

remove the core, the Golem is destroyed.

If I wanted, I think I could reuse the magic core, but I just tossed it into my mouth this time around. I savored it in my mouth like a piece of candy after finishing the skewers as I wandered around for more prey.

In this way, I continued hunting for the rest of the day, gathering a considerable amount of materials from other monsters.

My goal, the Jadar Wyverns, of which I managed to conquer around ten of them. Unfortunately, I didn’t gain any new abilities.

It’s not a problem though since I was able to secure enough materials to investigate why I was able to learn an ability from the aged Jadar Wyvern’s meat, even though it was already several days old.

For the time being I just need to wait around four days before I can check on this theory. Ah, by the way, the Tomboy Princess also seemed like she had plenty of fun and was delighted on our way home.

To note, I already had the Bearbee familiars leave for the base with one of the Skeleton Carriages as their guide. I came to the conclusion that I wouldn’t be able to enter the Royal Capital with them.

Day 154

Today, while we were doing our usual morning training session, the Hero of Darkness, Alrich Tin Agba, the one who had been observing us hidden on the Garnet Palace's rooftop, asked in a dignified manner if she could be permitted to participate.

As I said before, her figure is quite thin and resembles an eerie ghost.

It was likely that she would want to start observing us at a closer distance in the future anyway, so I won't stop her.

For now, I began considering how I got the attention of someone from within the Kingdom's highest positions. I might be able to outwit her, but the effectiveness of such an attempt has some extreme variables, so I won't even attempt it for now.

In the end, I reluctantly allowed Alrich to join in on the morning training session.

It was, after all, on the behest of our current employer, the Tomboy Princess, who thought that it would be quite interesting to allow her to participate.

Naturally, there was a much bigger reason hidden behind those actions, though I didn't press on it. With that in mind, I allowed her to participate,

though nothing happened in particular.

I will refer to Alrich as just the Dark Hero because her name is quite extensive and troublesome. For the remainder of the session, she simply worked hard in her training which gave me a favorable impression of her.

In the afternoon, I decided to spend my time in the Amber Palace since more applicants would likely attempt to flock towards me if I went out.

Due to the amount of meat Redhead ate during the hunt yesterday, it seems she gained quite a bit of strength.

Because of that, she wanted to test herself out through some sparring.

I decided to go ahead and allow her to do it with Auro and Argento.

While surprised by Redhead’s growth, I was not expecting the combination between Auro and Argento to have improved that much. With my blood and that of the sisters flowing in them, it seems that they share something similar to a twin’s connection. They were able to match each other’s movements perfectly without any signals.

While being happy at the growth of my children, I spent the rest of the time peacefully playing various games with them. The Princess who preferred to observe all the strings behind the scenes was intrigued by the scene.

It was quite amusing to see the Nobles Faction, who were steadily preparing their resolve and war potential while burning up all of their finances.

There were also nobles who were illegally embezzling the taxes collected from their respective territories for the purpose of acquiring precious metals and magical items. Their actions were trivial, yet effective for the sake of increasing their pockets.

If around two or three people dealt with all of them, the situation might end up drastically shifting to give us a considerable advantage. Being able to deal with an unknown threat would be nice and preferable.

In the evening, I decided to take Kanami-chan out for a date under the night's sky for the first time in awhile.

It was a bit hard to see the stars due to the magical lights throughout the streets in the Royal Capital, though since the view of the Royal Capital itself was quite nice, I didn't feel dissatisfied.

Ah, by the way, there's only two days left before the festival.

Whatever the results will be, I think i'll be able to enjoy myself.

Day 155

During the morning training, Female Samurai informed me that she sensed the presence of an Otherworlder that had entered the Sternbild Kingdom.

Based on what I've heard, it looks like the Otherworlder has joined a group from another country located to the west and had only recently arrived. Probably in order to participate in tomorrow's festival.

I immediately left with Female Samurai and two others for the sake of investigating the west side of the Royal Capital. We quickly encountered the Otherworlder after walking for just a short time.

Apparently, that person could also sense the presence of the Female Samurai and was searching for the location that was giving off a strong response.

The Otherworlder we encountered this time was a diminutive young man.

He was around 18 years old with short brown hair and black eyes. His skin was lightly tanned from the long journey and he seemed to be cheerful.

For protective gear, he wore a russet-colored pair of gauntlets and a breastplate which were made from the shell of a demon insect that resembled a giant ant lion called 【Deadly Grid】. It' s an insect that appears in desert areas.

He was also wearing a dark red coat made from the fur of a Manticore, a beast whose appearance was a combination of the wings of a bat, the tail of a scorpion, and the body of a lion with a human's face.

His light armor was strong enough to stop a crossbow bolt in it's tracks.

At his waist he wore a Tabarzin, a form of battle axe with a saddle-like axehead which had the ability to cause wounds that are quick to explode in gore.

He also carried several magical items that were relatively light and compact that could be used as striking weapons. He even had several sharp hunting knives, though these seemed like they were just spares though.

His main weapon is apparently the cannon on his back that one would think was a wooden pipe at first glance.

It was actually made from a combination of an unusually large quantity of Mithril and Damascus steel, two rare magical metals that created a flexible, wood-like appearance.

This young man was a 【Magic Gunman from Another World】, and was able to skillfully use the cannon on his back to deal with many opponents at once with his high grade firepower.

Rather than using physical ammo, it utilized his magic instead.

It looks like he isn’t able to run out of ammunition so long as he has magical power.

In addition, it seems that he can create five different bullets with different attributes.

There are apparently quite a few attributes that can be applied as well, such as:

A cannonball made of fire that can burn for a specific amount of time, even under water.

A cannonball made of ice that can even freeze magma.

A cannonball that can heal a companion’s injuries and recover stamina.

Etc...

Before he had come here, he spent a year using his abilities in a country in the far west where he gained quite a lot of renown as a high class adventurer.

Ah, something worth mentioning is that I’ve heard from Gobujii’s stories that guns do actually exist in this world.

They’re similar to a matchlock rifle in my world, but the firing range, power, and accuracy is extremely limited.

Even the Kingdom’s very own 【Sage from Another World】 faced many challenges and much frustration during the development of his first gun, and failed to improve it much more than the initial products.

As for the reason, there’s a major lack of technological capability and interest within the world to mass-produce them due to the unique laws of the world.

【Jobs】 and Magic being major factors in particular.

I’ll quickly give an explanation why this is the case.

With 【Jobs】, the body can be strengthened enough that one’s skin can actually repel a bullet and at times one can even move faster than the bullet.

Magic as well has an overwhelming power, high accuracy and a long range, making it far more useful than the guns produced thus far which are troublesome to maintain and use.

A large amount of time would be required to properly improve the gun, given that the abilities of the gun will continue to rise as long as some development continues.

Since my past life's history depicted as much, the probability of this also being the case here is very high.

However, killing monsters in this world gives one experience, and possessing multiple jobs can make one overwhelmingly powerful.

Therefore, the basic guns in this world are quite weak and not popular weapons of choice.

There are no 【Jobs】 for normal guns, meaning there aren't any 【Arts】 that assist with their usage.

This makes possession of guns more of an eccentric hobby for rich nobles rather than soldiers and adventurers.

Although there are very few of them, it is possible to acquire a 【Magic Gun】, which are considerably rare magical items, from the ≪Age of the Gods≫ dungeons.

The conditions to do so are unusually difficult as well.

There are a few rare jobs that can be acquired, but to unlock them, one needs to obtain a Magic Gun to do so.

The most basic example would be 【Job - Magic Gunner】 which allows one to produce magic bullets using monster materials, then altering them with their magic.

Well, with this, let’s just set this conversation to the side for now.

After observing the young man for a while, I managed to pick up at least that much information and discovered where he was staying.

Since I didn’t want to lose sight of him, I took the opportunity to attach one of my clones to him for communication purposes.

While my parasitic clones can turn people into subordinates, it’s possible for a strong enough person to reject them and weaken the clone. If that happens, it’s somewhat troublesome.

I can simplify the parasite depending on the situation and a person’s intentions, but I can’t force it when the person is strong enough.

I need to carefully carry out my plans, and since that’s the case, I need to be cautious so they aren’t exposed.

Well, I can be patient and take my time to corner him.

I’ll be more excited when I finally get to eat him that way.

Day 156

With a clear sky, the first day of the Tournament of Heroes began with the completion of the King's oath.

Early that morning, fireworks created from magical blasts resounded over the arena while the people flocked to obtain a seat.

Everyone, from the peasantry to the nobility was filled with excitement for the event.

The Royal Families and nobles from the Sternbild Kingdom and abroad were all gathered in private rooms set aside for their use, all pleasantly sharing idle conversation as they watched how the matches progressed.

The festival is roughly two days long and will last until tomorrow.

Today is more like the preliminary round of the tournament as the participants who are defeated today will be unable to join the fights tomorrow.

Since the first match is a battle royale, I decided to watch it because it was something that seemed interesting to me.

With a large number of people all confined in a small area, it was quite the

show with dramatic moments that caused great cheers of excitement from the spectators.

When a participant that was thought to be strong got defeated, their reaction was even larger.

There was also a lot of betting going on with an unexpected number of gamblers taking major risks betting on the popular contestants.

Though I can easily tell from afar that they will lose.

Right now, I’m in the stands for the nobles, acting as the Princess’ personal bodyguard.

Though I thought I’d have to change my clothes before entering the room, but since I was working and had the advantage of carrying a divine blessing, I gained the permission to enter with my usual attire.

I could already feel the stares from those around me, and while there were a few that were quite hostile, there were actually many that were friendly.

However, as expected, those from other countries, nobles from the Kingdom, as well as the Princess’ very own older brother, sisters, and younger brothers were all able to interact with each other with only subtle emotions mixed in.

Since I’m free to eat the dishes, filled with fresh fruits and other high quality food, I felt quite happy with myself.

However, after I ate a full platter of food by myself, the Boy Knight scolded me, so I restrained myself after that.

I comfortably observed the entire venue whose temperature was being kept constant with the use of a magical item.

As I continued to guard the Tomboy Princess in such a fine place, I expressed my gratitude.

However, because the other members could only sit in the general audience seats and not the nobles area, I had to stay fully alert during my job as a bodyguard.

Even though I could just idle, I’m not going to.

Afterwards, as night approached, all the scheduled events ended without incident.

At night, with the 64 main participants advancing to the main battle, the spectators began to move in groups towards the Royal Capital.

With stalls selling food and playing re-enactments of the competition continuing late into the evening, the night of the festival was far more crowded than usual.

While the nobles and Royal family were attending a dinner party in the night crowd, their minds were filled with dark intentions. As that was the case, I unfortunately was the bodyguard for the Princess and wasn't able to participate in the festival myself.

Instead, I instructed the other members to enjoy themselves. Since I attended with Kanami-chan, we really stood out.

While occasionally talking with the Princess as I guarded her from behind, the First Queen appeared with a glass of wine in hand.

You all remember the one, the very same Queen who is religiously obsessed…

Due to the relationship between the Queen and the Princess being mother and daughter, they laughed with each other often, so that was fine.

However, it was when the Queen occasionally glanced at me while they were chatting that sent a shiver running down my spine as she whispered

something in the ear of the Princess.

If I were to describe it, her eyes were the eyes of someone that wanted their target to notice the attention.

After seeing the Tomboy Princess with a happy smile that was obviously reflecting something eerie, I suddenly had a bad feeling in the pit of my stomach…

It was unexpected, but the First Queen left without anything happening.

It seemed like she was busy greeting and negotiating with the members of the Royal Family from other countries.

There weren't any problems that arose after that and I returned to the Amber Palace some time later.

After confirming that Auro and Argento, who had been enjoying themselves with the other members had returned to the Amber Palace and were already asleep, I decided to enjoy the moon together with Kanami-chan while having a small portion of alcohol.

Although I had a bit of food and a few glasses of alcohol during my escort duty, it was far from enough. The temperature gradually fell, but it was the perfect time for some expensive strong alcohol from the dungeon to warm

up. There wasn’t any conversation as we both just quietly drank some alcohol in the moonlight.

Soon after, the date’s atmosphere began to change, and we crawled into bed…

After the competition, I’ll probably be busy with a great many things.

Day 157

Today's weather was a bit cloud as the finals of the competition were soon to begin.

We ate breakfast together, starting with Jadar Wyvern steak.

The Royal Court's cook was introduced to us by the Tomboy Princess and did the cooking for us. It was emitting a fragrant smell and was amazing to start the meal. The way he cooked it turned the meat into butter before my knife. After eating several portions, however,

Ability [Wyvern's Roar] learned

While being taken in by the taste, I learned a new ability.

With this, I was able to confirm that my [Absorption] ability had evolved in some way.

At first, I thought that the mystery would be solved like this, however, as expected I'm still bothered by something. I wonder if there are some learning conditions that depend on the food's age and to what extent do these new conditions go.

Due to the difference in the strength between me and the devoured, the requirement of needing to consume a large quantity isn't strange.

It's quite possible that the time limit for each creature is totally different.

If that's the case, I might have actually gained something if I ate Velvet.

…

Learning the abilities of an ancient, yet incredibly powerful man…

Well, I can't help but think I've wasted a great chance at something. Rather than cremating him at once, I should have tried tasting the other arm, but it's far too late to be regretting the past now.

With no other choice, I reluctantly gave up on Velvet and decided to test the limits during breakfast with the Jadar steak.

Even if I'm unable to grasp the limits of this currently, I need to be able to gain a rough understanding.

After the morning's rough confusion, I decided to occupy myself through observing today's competition during my guard duty of the Tomboy Princess

in the noble’s private section.

The battles unfolded in a specially established arena with everyone present being quite flashy.

For example, there was a fight between an old male [High Sorcerer] that was equipped with a mace and a young female monster tamer that was accompanied by a familiar.

The old man froze the entire arena with ice magic while the girl’s leopard familiar turned into white flames and grew to the size of an elephant.

The leopard’s white flames melted the ice and approached with great killing intent as the old man attempted to counter with his mace.

Though, I should say that since killing is prohibited, the attack would be more fitting to be called intent to put him close to death instead.

Although the young girl did fight hard, it was in vain as the lively old man ended up emerging victorious, despite being covered in wounds.

In addition, the high-ranking members of the two countries made a racket as their [Heroes] put their country’s pride on the line and clashed head on. The bloodshed on both sides unfolded spectacularly.

As for the young Otherworlder, he was still in the competition after he used his hand cannon to blow away a [Master Swordsman] who had wielded 68 different swords.

Gah, seeing all this just made me want to eat everyone! If I were to display my thoughts, it would be seeing a large quantity of high quality dishes, the best quality ingredients, all arranged one after another.

Though the battle between the Heroes overshadowed the normal battles, the magic used by the old man was top-class and the girl's familiar was probably great to eat.

It's a golden opportunity to kill them both. The spectacle before me is within my reach. However, I have to and must restrain myself. In addition to the general status quo that is currently keeping me restricted from eating, there is also a thing one must be aware of called timing.

Right now is not a good time, collecting information little by little on which targets are best is what I should be doing now as it will prove useful in the future. Still, my desire to eat all of them is almost at it's peak, so I suppressed it by eating plenty of food that was set out in the auditorium. Perhaps because it's the second day, there were many rare dishes that had been made specifically for me.

As the day turned to night, the Royal Capital was filled with magical lights, the competition's finals reached their climax.

In the end, two people out of the several thousand contestants were left in the competition finals. The first was the Kirika Empire's Hero of Roaring Thunder and the other was the Atarakua Demon Empire's Scarlet Chief General.

In addition to being the next head of the Empire's grand nobles, the Hero of Roaring Thunder, Artunel Bayard Rickenbar, is the third ranked in the Eight Great Knights and holds great influence within the group.

The Hero's presence is like a prince drawn in a painting, having the usual gender-neutral good looks with blond hair and blue eyes. She's wearing heavy silver armor and a mantle while wielding a double-edged one-handed sword. Having shown off her good looks by not wearing a helmet, the festival might have just received it's most high-pitched cheering thus far. Though, since the Hero is a woman, there were some dirty jeering from the men, but obviously they were ignored.

Next, the Scarlet Chief General, Ballark Barak, is from the Atarakua Demon Empire and is the fourth ranked amongst the Six Chief Generals. He is a Midian with his entire body covered in a scarlet metal shell. The metal shell is something similar to an insectoid's exoskeleton and is the basic characteristic of the metal Midians, being both their main weapon and their personal armor.

Since it symbolizes the Midian, there are some differences between

individuals and it’s something each one of them holds great pride in. In the case of Ballark, whose form resembles an ogre, his dull scarlet metallic shell is covered in flames, acting both as his weapon and armor.

The intensity of the flames can be changed depending on his intentions. He had sharp spikes protruding from his big limbs and a long tail of fire that seared the ground. Also, although it’s troublesome to use, a part of his metallic shell is capable of shifting into the shape of a sword. The temperature of the flames released were hotter than those of the Red Bear’s.

The fight between the two was so intense that, in the conclusion, several of the magical barriers and magical items used to protect the spectators were destroyed.

Many of the audience were surprised by the spectacle. However, thanks to both the Sternbild Kingdom and other countries’ precautions, there were hundreds of barriers in place, so no one was injured.

The fight continued for approximately 30 minutes, thoroughly destroying the arena in the process. Because it was the last fight, it was quite intense since they weren’t holding back at all. The arena is probably going to be out of action for some time.

In the end, the winner was the Scarlet Chief General. Though they were able to totally rival each other in terms of ability, their affinities decided the

outcome.

The Hero of Roaring Thunder held the advantage of swordsmanship and speed. Since the [Scarlet Chief General] was covered in a heavy metallic shell, one could say that the Hero was simply toying with him.

However, the Hero of Roaring Thunder's strongest attribute, her lightning attacks, capable of creating powerful oscillating waves, didn't affect the Scarlet Chief General who had was constantly covered in intense flames.

He probably has something similar to [Complete Lightning Tolerance] or something similar as an ability, just as I do. That must be the case since the dense group of lightning strikes seemed to be erased as they made contact. With his metallic shell redirecting the oscillating waves into the ground, his armor that could resist many of the Hero's attacks played a major factor.

By the way, the Dark Hero participated as one of the representatives of the Sternbild Kingdom, the host country, but was defeated by the Hero of Roaring Thunder during the semifinals.

Though she fought from the shadows, she was eventually worn down and beaten by the swift lightning attacks. However, the Dark Hero's true strength lies in surprise attacks and techniques launched under the cover of darkness, so the outcome had already been decided when she had to fight her opponent head-on.

After two days of fierce fighting, the festival's end was marked by the King's oath, just as it had started. Afterwards, there was a banquet hosted by the King that continued late into the night with almost all of the 64 participants attending.

Kanami-chan and I attended it as the Princess' bodyguards along with the Boy Knight. Unfortunately, Redhead couldn't participate this time either, though both the Female Samurai and Gladiator King remained after the competition of course.

It was the perfect opportunity for the Tomboy Princess to discuss about several things that she couldn't mention yesterday. With that, we sealed our partnership, which was an idea brought up by her, giving both of us the authority to operate freely.

With many people speaking favorably of the mercenary corps, it looks like the advertising was successful. Using our fame as the replacement for business cards, we can tentatively accept requests from which we can lay the groundwork for infiltration and ability to then abandon them afterwards without problems.

After everything was over, I immediately went to eat a meal, picking up Kanami-chan on the way before parting with her again. There were similar dishes to before, and as I began to show my true nature as a glutton, and there were even some people who challenged me.

Thus, my distraction has finally begun. During this time, all operations were being handled swiftly and quietly.

Day 158

Within one of the rooms within the Amber Palace, I suppressed my desire to feed as I gazed upon the results of last night's hunt. It was truly an exciting hunt that continued up until just before dawn.

All the prey i'd set my sights upon were powerful and quite likely to have special abilities I didn't have or know of. If something unforeseen happened there was the chance of sustaining severe injuries. Still, I was highly confident that my targets would be caught.

However, in the end there wasn't anything unexpected and all five targets were hunted down and slain.

The five targets we hunted were the Otherworlder with [Job - Magic Gunner] and four others that were employed by nobles. There was a middle-aged man who wielded an axe and was the leader of another mercenary company, a young Dragonewt who wielded two swords, a male [Gillman] who used a trident and could manipulate water, and finally a [Lion Beastman] with a flaming mane.

It turns out that the young male Otherworlder was the easiest to kill. When he attended the banquet and reunited with Female Samurai, he had actually dared to try and flirt with her. After giving her a cue, they drank alcohol together until he was heavily drunk.

She then brought him back to the inn as planned. At that point he was subdued without any trouble and didn’t even have time to feel pain. The other four targets took some time though.

The [Mercenary Leader] had to be separated from his mercenaries.

The young Dragonewt refrained from alcohol and remained sober.

The [Gillman] had snuck out from the banquet to swim in the river flowing through the Royal Capital.

Finally, the [Lion Beastman] had managed to remain alert despite being drunk.

With no other real choice, I had to mix in a sleeping poison into the ale the mercenaries were drinking to kill the Mercenary Leader while they slept.

A powerful diuretic poison was injected stealthily into the fruit the Dragonewt was eating. He had to then be kidnapped while he was in restroom.

The [Gillman] was caught using a brutal tactic similar to fishing with dynamite.

The [Lion Beastman] was the most troublesome, he had to be assaulted

under the cover of darkness as he was returning to his room.

Since these four had connections to the Nobles Faction, this was killing two birds with one stone as their war potential was decreased.

I had noticed movement as we were hunting so I judged that it was better to hold off on the Otherworlder until after I dealt with the others.

This time it was the presence of the Dark Hero that proved the most troublesome.

Because I could constantly feel her presence hidden within the shadows, I had to concentrate far more on hiding than just hunting.

If it weren’t for [Kidnap] and [Recognition Difficulty], I seriously might not have managed to hunt in the first place.

I quickly looted the equipment from the five corpses and consumed them each one by one.

Ability [Flame Lion] learned

Ability [High-Speed Swimming] learned

Ability [True Dragon's Martial Arts] learned

Ability [Job - Magic Gunner] learned

Ability [Spirit Refinement Technique] learned

Ability [Divinely Forged Form of the Otherworlder] learned

As a result of my hunt, I managed to gain quite a few good abilities.

In all fairness, I still really want more but it's fine for the moment because the Otherworlder's flesh was far more enjoyable than I had expected it to be.

As I continued to consume his body it was as if power was flowing into me. To top it all off, i'll say it again, the flesh was simply divine.

If possible, i'd like to eat more in the future… hah… it's going to take some willpower to keep myself from eating the Female Samurai…

After I finished eating their bodies, I created five clones to mimic each of their appearances.

I had already investigated how they had conducted themselves beforehand on how they planned to prepare to depart from the Royal Capital.

Because of this, even if they somehow go missing on the way to their destinations, I won't be suspected.

I made their equipment just a part of the clones as a part of the disguise. Since I've done this, I won't have to worry about reclaiming the equipment later and any other issues that might entail.

Once I finished everything regarding the hunt, I began the training of the 14 new members that had managed to pass my qualifications. I had contacted all of the members who qualified yesterday and not one of them was absent. Though, after our usual morning training there wasn't a single person remaining unscathed.

All the members had collapsed from exhaustion and looked miserable as their vomit and sweat covered the ground. Hmph, they need to persevere since I'm only going easy on them for today as an introduction.

I was tired after staying up all night so I took a nap roughly mid afternoon. I woke up in the evening, ate dinner and took care of my routine duties then went back to sleep.

Day 159

It seems that some nobles have been moving busily behind the scenes as of late.

Due to the Minister's assassination, whose culprit has still yet to be determined, the Nobles Faction held a meeting to decide on their next course of action. As the result of this meeting, his grandson formally became the head of the Nobles Faction.

The coup d'état probably coming close. It's probably a given since they've already begun to gather a large quantity of soldiers and volunteers who are discontent with the current Kingdom for the sake of starting a revolution.

The Minister apparently also had started spoiling his grandson after his son was slain on the battlefield several years ago during a war with a neighboring nation.

The grandson is quite the handsome man and is strong enough to have made it into the previous competition's finals. Though, since his grandfather began to lavish and spoil him, something in his head was warped. While he's only distantly related to the Royal Family, it seems he strongly believes he's actually worth of being a King.

Given that he's actually one of the suitors for the Tomboy Princess, he does have a decent chance of taking the throne.

Due to the presence of that Old Sly Fox that had guided the Minister while he was alive, it can be said that the Strong Grandson is probably being controlled where his Grandfather was merely advised. It's probable that the Old Sly Fox had lain the seeds for this beforehand as well.

Because the Old Sly Fox had various preparations in advance, it seems that many people from the Sternbild Kingdom, including even the Leader of the Knights and the Chief Civil Officer are under the Nobles Faction's control.

With their preparations almost complete, there's a high probability that they will make their move soon.

Due to the Minister's assassination, the power of the Nobles Faction had declined some as the nobles that were on the fence, as well as those wishing to avoid assassination left the faction. Though despite all that, the group still holds a substantial level of power.

In other words, a civil war capable of splitting the Kingdom in two is likely to happen soon enough. For now I'll be keeping tabs on just how it'll develop.

Since it's a given that due to the Tomboy Princess being our client, i'll be siding with the Royal Family. If all else, no matter what happens, I'll make sure that she at the very least stays safe.

While collecting as much information as I can, I should start planning what to do from here on out.

Day 160

Today we left the Royal Capital to head off for the Labyrinth City Purgatory.

The entire group consisted of Auro, Argento and the Tomboy Princess' personal guards. We went set off using several of the skeleton carriages and we'll then divide into dungeons that suit our current abilities.

Along with being able to obtain a variety of unique monster materials and magical items, the combat within dungeons is an efficient way of gaining experience, allowing them to gain levels far faster than on the outside.

They will be able to practice their party coordination as well. Though training and practice is important, one can only really learn more through true combat.

It's necessary to be strict since this is important to Auro and Argento. It's something like a lion leaving behind it's cubs… or rather… pushing its own cubs off a cliff so they… can fly? Hem…

For the children, overcoming dangerous situations should allow them to mature faster. Since we'll be staying in the Labyrinth City Purgatory for some time, I ordered the group to enter the dungeons and return in three days time.

After seeing the members off, I began making the necessary preparations

with Kanami-chan and the Princess within the city. We began to discuss on what we should do in the future.

Meanwhile, a fair portion of meat from assassins and spies from other countries now found itself within my belly. Though, these small fries no longer satisfy as I still have my eyes on another, far greater feast. The opportunity to consume a [Hero] or even a [Great Hero] yet looms over the horizon.

Because of the circumstances, I couldn't even attack a single [Hero] or [Great Hero] I met during the festival Tournament of Heroes. Having all of that meat held before me and not even getting to consume a single morsel was causing my urges to run wild.

However, since I managed to eat the Otherworlder, I can somehow endure it for a short while. It's only temporary since I can only hold myself back for so long before my urges get the better of me.

I wonder if the Strong Grandson will try something soon. If that's the case, I might even get the Tomboy Princess' permission to eat one of the Sternbild Kingdom's Four Symbolic Heroes.

From the bottom of my cold heart, I eagerly await the upcoming turmoil.

Day 161

As the sun was about to rise, Kanami and I had not yet entered the dungeon, since we were meeting up with Minokichi, Asue and my second son, Oniwaka, for the first time in awhile.

Based on the signs I've seen, rumors I've heard and most of the current information I've obtained, I have a feeling that my Book of Psalms' fourth chapter, 【Encouraging the Kingdom's Revolution】, will soon begin on its own. For that reason, I decided to make some preparations in advance and had our main force leave our base in the forest and start heading this way. Minokichi's team will serve as our vanguard, and since they were already nearby, I decided we should eat together.

With the addition of Minokichi's group, the number of our people staying in the Labyrinth City Purgatory has increased.

The main income of Labyrinth Cities comes from the adventurers that enter their dungeons and return with dropped items and treasure. There are also some that seek to challenge the dungeons, determined to find their own path to follow. To help outfit these adventurers, there are shops for weapons, armor and magic tools. There are also people that run shops that sell second-hand magic items, including tools that improve the profitability of hunting. Compared to other cities, excluding the Royal Capital, there is a big difference in the percentage of people who come from other places and the population that lives here.

Because of that, a moderate number of restaurants exist within the city, the scale of each allowing them to serve around a hundred people at a time.

I took a brief look around, where I observed that there was a group of dozens of people standing in a corner of a restaurant, all of which seemed like they belonged to the same clan. I also saw a group that seemed like they were mercenaries, as well as the occasional group of people that were having a friendly conversation as they ate together.

Our group was slightly larger, with less than sixty people. Despite that, we were able to quickly find a restaurant that we could all eat at when we looked for one.

However, because of Minokichi's gigantic five meter tall body, the interior of the restaurant was too small, so we had no choice but to eat our meal outside.

For that reason, we went to a suitable restaurant and ate a dish named "Horseheaded Demon Guard Beast's Chablis Hot Pot" for lunch.

As its name suggests, Chablis Hot Pot is an easy to make dish similar to horse meat hot pot, which uses the meat of the Mezuki, an unusual species found on this continent that appears as a boss monster in dungeons. The hot pot contains an abundance of nutritious vegetables, with thinly sliced Mezuki meat that you quickly boil in the pot and then dip in sauce as you eat.

Given that it has gotten colder recently, the hot dish was just perfect for the weather, since it helps warm the body. On top of that, it made the alcohol I drank with it even more delicious.

You might not think it's a good idea to have alcohol in the morning, but because I'm a Lord, I'm able to drink it like it's water without getting drunk, so there's no problem.

By the way, staying true to its name, Mezuki is a kind of demon with the head of a horse.

It is approximately 4 to 5 meters tall, making it slightly smaller than certain Trolls and Minotaurs. The muscles it possesses greatly increase its armor, while also hiding its inhuman strength. It had horse legs that were as thick as a log, which allowed it to move faster than its appearance suggested. Since it is a boss monster, its vitality is strong, as well.

It won't die easily even if it's disembowelled with a large sword, and it can keep moving even after half of its brain has been destroyed, making it a very difficult monster.

Its outward appearance is closest to a Minotaur, but it specializes in using the Sasumata or Tsukubō , instead of a battle axe. Mezuki always seems to appear with Gozuki, a bull-headed demon that is equipped with living body armor that is shaped like large armor.

While Gozuki are superior in terms of the destructive power of their blows, Mezuki surpass them in terms of speed and like to play with their enemies.

The heavy offensive unleashed by the coordination of these two demons deals a lot of damage and has defeated many adventurers, including those who can make it to the last level of the dungeon.

They are both a strong species to begin with, and they are further strengthened by the effects of the dungeon. I hear that currently they're only taken out about once a month because of their considerable strength.

This is why the hot pot, which uses quite a bit of Mezuki meat, costs a lot. Honestly, it's probably not a dish someone should eat in the morning, nor is it the sort of money someone should use for a single meal, either. I think these feelings are unavoidable, though.

In the end, no matter how strong a boss monster is, it's no more than meat once it's killed.

One "Mezuki Thigh," an item drop obtained by someone killing a Mezuki, can be brought back and sold for a high price in the market. The restaurants then buy the meat, which we then get to eat as delicious food.

Although this is how the world works, it made me think a little.

If I am killed someday, it's possible someone will eat me.

...Perhaps someone like Kanami will do it. Even now, she often comes to suck my blood. Sometimes she gets lively and bites my flesh, which I'm sure she eats, because I see the unstable emotions in the depths of her eyes, which are hard to describe.

Well, I don't think I'd mind if it was Kanami. I think I'd be fine with Minokichi and the others, too.

I'll leave it at that.

After we finished eating, the Tomboy Princess met Minokichi for the first time and became so excited that it was troublesome.

She tried to climb his massive back and when she fell, I panicked and caught her so she wouldn't be injured. However, she was still determined to climb him, so I caught her when she fell a second time.

This continued for a while, until the exhausted but uninjured Tomboy Princess climbed onto my right shoulder and fell asleep, while holding onto my horns.

I decided to confirm the results of the descent of Minokichi's group into the

dungeons, while thinking to myself, "Please, just don't drool on me."

This time, they were able to spend more time inside of the dungeon than they did before, which allowed them to gather better quality magic items and monster materials, as well as more of them.

I can currently distribute magic armor, or at least three tools, to all the members of our steadily increasing group. Minokichi's group has also collected some items, but I took a particularly large amount from the Minister when he was assassinated.

For the record, I still have quite a few powerful items from Velvet's inheritance as well, but I don't think it'll be too late if I wait for my companions to grow a bit stronger first. It's still too early for most of the group to use them.

There are many powerful objects in Velvet's inheritance, which makes them difficult to handle.

After we finished going over everything, I decided to spar with Minokichi for the first time in a while.

We paid one silver plate to reserve the guild's training grounds. We decided to spar unarmed, since the damage would be magnified if we used our weapons.

Because of his training in the dungeon, Minokichi's footwork became quicker, more forceful, and more invasive than before. The power of his blows had also improved in proportion to his strong foundation.

I avoided his fist as it was swung downwards from overhead vigorously. It pierced the ground with such force that the surrounding earth cracked, while a thud that resounded like a thunderous roar came from the impact point.

Every step Minokichi took carved his thick hoof prints into the ground, while the thunder flames that were mixed into his breath crackled as they were released. The powers of fire and lightning remained on his fists, as well.

Despite the fact that this was just training, each attack could cause considerable damage if I took a direct hit. If I don't use my abilities, there's no way I'd be able to dodge them.

If he were serious, I'd obviously have to use them, but this time I had no problem.

We sparred non-stop for around an hour, but we had to stop because the training grounds had been ruined. Although I wasn't satisfied, since I was able to confirm that he'd gotten stronger, I decided it was enough.

We solved the issue of the ruined training grounds by apologizing to the

guild master and having Asue repair the damage. If we had left it as it was, we would've had to pay a fine.

After that, we parted ways with Minokichi's group as planned and decided to enter a dungeon.

I intended to enter with Kanami, but the Tomboy Princess and the rest of the group came along, as well. Because of that, I decided to choose one of the higher difficulty dungeons that Purgatory had to offer.

The dungeon I chose is known as 【Vesper Cave】. It's a cave dungeon that has a structure similar to an ant's nest.

Just as the information I collected before entering the dungeon indicated, the cave's rock walls were damp, which caused them to reflect the light in strange ways. There were many pools of water on the uneven floor that could be an unexpected obstacle while fighting, as well. The temperature was lower than expected, causing our breath to become visible. We were able to hear the sound of flowing water if we listened carefully, as even small sounds echoed off the rock walls.

Because of the many water-based traps in the dungeon, if we hadn't prepared waterproof gear to protect against the cold in advance, our body temperature would've dropped and our stamina would've been drained before we knew it. Our light source was the light moss growing here and there on the surface of the rocks, though the light was very dim.

Many of the monster types that appear here use the basic terrain to launch surprise attacks on adventurers, though some are powerful species that are very tough, as well.

Some of these monsters include:

"Aqua Slime," a Slime that looks like the water puddles around it at a glance.

"Water Strider," a creature that shoots water from its mouth like a bullet.

"Poison Cave Lizard," a Lizardman whose claws and fangs contain a powerful poison.

"Red King Crab," a huge crab that is the size of an ogre and is clad in a hard shell that's stronger than steel.

"Cave Alligator," a Gatorman with the head of a gator and the body of a human. It can make full use of the variety of weapons that it possesses.

"Assassin Bat," a bat that uses ultrasonic waves to attack from the darkness with its wing blades, which can cause negative ailments.

"Aqua Elemental," a monster that can manipulate water. Its body is made of water that has gathered around a metallic core, giving it a similar appearance to a Slime, except that it floats in the air.

"Thunder Hog," a monster that fires lightning attacks from the countless needles on its back.

"Earthshaker," a creature similar to a catfish that uses its long whiskers to manipulate electricity and the earth.

And so on...

As expected of this terrain, a lot of the monsters have abilities that use the water and ice attributes. Given that some monsters appear to make use of the lightning attribute as well, which is one of our weaknesses, we will have to widen our countermeasures. If we are careless, there are a lot of things that can trip us up.

By the way, the Red King Crab is the strongest among them.

It has a huge body with a strong shell and four huge pincers that are sharp enough to cut Mithril, to say nothing of steel. It can shoot countless exploding bubbles out of its mouth like a machine gun and has special abilities that increase its speed, offense and defense. It looks like, depending on their party's composition, some groups of adventurers immediately decide to run away from it instead of fighting.

It's probably considered a mini-boss.

Well, that's the popular story, anyway.

Although it was rare, when I came across a Red King Crab, I crushed its shell with my silver arm and killed it before collecting all the item drops, which included its shell and legs, among other things. In addition, I killed as many of the other monsters as I could as we advanced. Of course, I also disarmed the traps and collected everything from the treasure chests we found on the way.

Normally, the bodies of the dungeon's monsters will disappear if they aren't eaten quick enough, which makes returning with them impossible. Although it's possible to return with the dropped items, the quantity is too small when compared to the monster's entire body.

However, because I was able to bring the bodies back by putting them in my item box, I collected them as I made it seem like they vanished on their own. This way I could fool the Tomboy Princess and the others.

As expected, there were many hindrances to the Boy Knight and the others leveling up. Because we had to stop often, we didn't have enough time to make it to the last level of the dungeon, so I settled with us stopping once we reached the halfway point.

If we return by taking the shortest route, it shouldn't take us much time to get back.

That said, we picked a reasonably open area and pitched our tents for the day.

Since I'd combined my thread with the normal tents sold in the Labyrinth City, I was confident in their durability. Even though a blow from a Red King Crab class monster would destroy the tent, it should be able to withstand the attacks of a Water Strider level monster for several minutes.

In addition, I spread webs made of my thread around the area as a precaution, so it won't be necessary for someone to stay awake and keep watch. After we made dinner, we prepared to get a good night's sleep.

The main ingredients for today's dinner were the dungeon's monsters we'd killed, with the crab stew we made using drops from the Red King Crab being especially delicious. As the body became firm, its flavor permeated the soup nicely. The soup warmed our bodies from the inside and helped us deal with our cold surroundings, as well.

However, because I wasn't able to learn any abilities even after eating a lot, I should probably think about whether or not I should rank up the next time I can do so.

Day 162

We were attacked by monsters approximately eight times throughout the night.

Since I quickly beat them to death while I was half asleep, the Tomboy Princess' group was able to get a good night's sleep.

We ate the monsters that were killed for breakfast before rapidly descending into the lower levels of the dungeon. We reached the last level just before noon. The final level opened up into a dome-shaped room.

Observing the space, it was approximately forty meters in diameter with a slightly uneven floor and huge stalactites that were hanging from the ceiling like icicles. It looked like the battle would probably take place in the center, where there was a circle of stones, known as rimstones, that looked like the ridges of a terraced rice field. The relatively level floor of the room made it seem like it would be easy to fight in.

There was a shining water plant growing naturally within the clear blue rimstone pool, as a mysterious light originated from underwater. The light produced a scene similar to stars floating in the night sky as it reflected on the ceiling.

Despite it being the lowest level where the boss monster appears, it was a mysterious place worth admiring.

The Tomboy Princess, Kanami and the others were quietly muttering their thoughts as they gazed carelessly at the scene.

As for me, given that I had Auro and Argento enter a different dungeon this time, I think I'll come and see it again with them.

However, the quiet moment ended when the boss monster arrived.

Even if it couldn't help appearing, I honestly wanted to say, "Just wait a little longer."

At any rate, the boss monster of the 【Vesper Cave】 is the 【High Octorp】.

It's a monster that's similar to a chimera made of aquatic creatures, giving it a very grotesque appearance.

It's a humanoid that's approximately four meters tall, with its whole body covered in a dark red shell made of a material similar to chitin. On its abdomen is a huge circular mouth with a shape similar to a large drum, which had three rows of sharp fangs that moved subtly as it searches for prey. Its left forearm had expanded, transforming the four strange claws of its hand so they could be used as a shield, while its right hand is a huge claw similar to that of a Red King Crab. The lower half of its body is shaped

like an octopus and it has approximately ten wriggling jellyfish-like tentacles growing out of its back. Its head was similar to a shark's in some respects, with four large eyes that were strangely similar to a deep-sea fish's, which were restlessly surveying its entire surroundings. It spoke the human language in a strange voice that you couldn't bear to listen to, which was emitted from the part of its body that was similar to a mouth.

Despite its weird and unpleasant appearance, it has the considerable strength you would expect of a boss monster.

Naturally, its octopus legs and right claw have supernatural strength. Its mouth-like part contains a strong, red dissolving fluid and the octopus ink that it releases can cause several negative status effects, including 【Blindness】, 【Confusion】 and 【Petrification】 among others. Its tentacles are the most troublesome of them all, though.

A powerful paralytic poison is secreted from the jellyfish-like tentacles on its back.

Most people are immediately incapacitated from one sting of its tentacles. After that, they are either crushed by its eight octopus legs or finely chopped up by its claw, before finally being eaten by its abdomen's large mouth. This is the standard pattern it uses to kill adventurers.

In addition, it can manipulate the surrounding water, making it necessary to work out countermeasures before challenging it.

By the way, it makes its appearance either by jumping out from within the rimstone pool or falling from a hole in the center of the ceiling. It seems to vary from time to time.

The way it appeared this time was by jumping out of the rimstone pool. I challenged the 【High Octorp】 on my own.

The abilities I could use were limited because the Tomboy Princess' group was there. However, since I was able to use the type that strengthened my body without them being able to understand what I did just by watching me, I killed it in about three minutes.

Although I was able to break its hard shell relatively easily, I had a bit of trouble because its very soft body appeared to possess the 【Physical Attack Resistance】 ability, or perhaps something better. I used my halberd to cut off its octopus legs many times, but a new leg would immediately grow back from where it was cut. Its resilience was not to be taken lightly.

When the 【High Octorp】 received a large amount of damage that overwhelmed its great resilience, it would prey on the huge fish and crabs swimming in the rimstone pool in order to recover. This prolonged the fight to some extent.

So that I didn't have to worry about it recovering again, I couldn't let it eat anymore of the huge fish or crabs. I didn't think it would eat the octopus legs

that I cut off itself in order to recover. Well, I don't really have the right to complain about it since I often do the same thing.

【"Frontier Psalms," Conditions to Clear 【Vesper Octorp】 Achieved: 【Solo Kill】 【Time Limit】 【Parts Destruction】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Assigned Rare Skill 【One Who Captures and Devours】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Assigned Rare Skill 【Vesper Slayer】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Awarded 【Ancient】 Class Magic Item 【Vesper's Outer Shell： Octorp】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Awarded 【Ordeal Breakthrough Celebratory Item [First Attempt Restricted Deluxe Edition]】】

It appears that I cleared another part of the Frontier Psalms, as well.

When I checked it, I determined that there are around six or seven clear conditions for each Frontier Psalm. It seems they can be completed if at least three conditions have been cleared.

The conditions usually contain 【Solo Kill】, so the probability of those who challenge the dungeons solo completing it is higher than those in a party. Comparatively, only the unusual conditions appear to change.

Well, I guess it's a pretty quick way to increase your own strength.

A single person fighting and killing a boss monster species that's been enhanced by the dungeon's power is very difficult, so it's almost never done. I've done it, though.

However, even if you have the ability to do so, meeting the other conditions seems to be a matter of luck. I should probably let Kanami and the others do this as well.

Afterwards, I casually collected the High Octorp's corpse in order to eat it later and let Kanami do the boss fight again.

Since the three conditions 【Solo Kill】, 【Time Limit】, and 【Parts Destruction】 have already been cleared, they should be easy to fulfill if it's fought again.

My prediction was correct. It took around ten minutes for the dungeon to create a new High Octorp, but it was quickly defeated. Because she fought to fulfill the previously mentioned conditions, Kanami cleared the Frontier

Psalm for the High Octorp and gained the same abilities that I did.

It was as expected up to this point. However, what caught my attention was the fact that she wasn't given the 【Vesper's Outer Shell: Octorp】, but instead got a 【Vesper's Strange Blade: Octorp】, which was a magic item of the same rank.

It appears that the magic item you get varies, with both its shape and its abilities being different. The only thing they always have in common is that the item names will include the boss monster's name in them.

When I experimented with using the Vesper's Outer Shell, an exoskeleton in the shape of the High Octorp was instantly equipped. Similar to the two exoskeletons I can equip with 【Equip Exoskeleton】, 【Red Bear Beast King's Prestige】 and 【Jade Eagle King's Flight】, I felt no obstruction in my movements. As for the tentacles on the back and the octopus legs, it looks like you can move them with your thoughts, though some practice is necessary.

The exoskeleton type of magic items are considered a kind of shapeshifting item, I believe.

By the way, according to the Boy Knight, who is currently guarding the Tomboy Princess, Vesper's Outer Shell is a 【Relic】 class item that is among the most expensive in its class. I'd say that the cost is justified, since in addition to the acquired item having the pseudo-abilities of the boss

monster it came from, it's also the kind of item that you won't get if you don't clear the Frontier Psalm for the boss.

Now, as for the Vesper's Strange Blade that Kanami obtained, the weapon's blade was formed from the jellyfish-like tentacles of the boss. A powerful paralytic poison similar to the High Octorp's is released from its edge. On top of that, it seems to have regenerative abilities and tentacles, which there are roughly ten of, can be freely moved based on the owner's intentions.

It can be turned into something similar to a thrusting sword by bundling the tentacles together. It seems that it can also be made into something similar to a multi-knotted whip by allowing the tentacles to bend. It appears to have a fairly high number of applications.

This might be dangerous, now Kanami is really following a path similar to a queen. There's usually no problem, since she normally has a bright, gentle and graceful personality. However, she becomes brutal once her switch has been flipped, like that time when the goblins tried to attack me in my sleep and she tried to tear that one goblin's head off. It worries me a little.

...Well, it'll be fine. I guess Kanami's enemies will suffer greatly. That's how I've decided to think, anyway.

Once I pulled myself together, I secretly collected the second High Octorp's body, which had been transformed into a huge ice sculpture. We then collected various materials from the dome-shaped boss room.

These materials included the shining water plant and the huge fish the High Octorp ate, among other things. The shining water plant is rare because it only grows in certain places, while the huge fish can be used as materials for high priced drugs. The huge crabs are expensive high-class ingredients that can be sold to the nobles.

Since these bonus items can only be obtained by the parties that can safely kill the High Octorp, I took them without reservation.

By the way, I didn't gather them after the first kill because they don't get reproduced very fast, so I thought that it'd be a good idea to gather them once we finished.

Afterwards, we took the shortest route out of the dungeon. I had the Tomboy Princess ride on my shoulder because she was exhausted and moving slowly, while I acted as the vanguard and mowed down every monster we encountered on our trip back. It took us less than two hours to return.

The Tomboy Princess was excited like a kid getting on a rollercoaster, so I had to calm her down a little.

At the same time, I felt obligated to admonish her like a good parent would to their own children. Not just to discipline them, but to teach them other things, as well.

Day 163

Today, all of the members that I told to stay in the dungeon for three days returned safely.

Though there was someone that was seriously injured in a battle with a dungeon monster, there were no major problems since they were healed with a Life Potion that I supplied them with in advance. These potions were made by Alchemist-san using item drops.

Because there was more time than expected, many groups reached the final level of the dungeon. Although they weren't all able to defeat the boss monster, since there was a group that was able to do so, I'd say that the results are satisfactory for the time being.

There were many people with refreshed expressions on their face, so I wondered whether they were able to realize the power that their training up to this point had cultivated. Auro and Argento were among the group that defeated the boss monster

While I thought, "As expected of my children," I gave the magic gun and Tabarzin that I took from the young male Otherworlder to them as a reward for their hard work.

I gave Auro the magic gun, while Argento was given the Tabarzin. I did this because Auro's nature causes her to prefer fighting from a distance, while

Argento's nature causes him to prefer close combat.

Since they were both pleased with their presents, there shouldn't be any fighting between them. In addition, I collected the magic items they acquired in the dungeon, and after redistributing them, I decided to let each person do what they wanted for the day. Basically, they have the day off.

As for those guarding the Tomboy Princess for now, Kanami-chan was giving her ideas on how to mess with the Boy Knight, so I decided to enter the Vesper Cave dungeon again with Auro and Argento.

We talked about many things as we advanced, with me teaching both of them about the structural weaknesses, killing methods, and ways of dismantling the dungeon monsters that we encountered on our way to the lowest level of the dungeon.

Both of them are still children, but their minds and bodies are growing very quickly. This is because they inherited 【Precocious】, an ability I've had since my time as a Goblin that is a racial trait that the species starts out with. I've been instructing them daily on the actions they should take when meeting people that can make full use of both their surface and real intentions, but they can still be deceived even if they're careful since there's a part of them that's still pure and innocent.

Although assistance is possible, it might be better for them to deal with training their fighting strength and ability to think on their own. In a worst

case scenario, because their ear cuffs have my clones in them, I'm able to give them advice and it can tell me their whereabouts if it's necessary.

Thinking about this as we descended, it was a little past noon when we finally came to the final level. Since we advanced using the shortest route, it didn't take much time despite the fighting and lectures.

Auro muttered from behind, "Even though we're weaker than this place and we're being cautious, we're still descending so easily...father really is amazing." Argento inclined his head to the side in response, "I know, right? The red crab...Red King Crab, was it? When I touched its shell, it seemed very tough. Why was his blow able to break it?"

Was I able to show them a bit of their splendid father's back? While thinking that, I enjoyed the boss room's mysterious scene, as well as the complex look in the eyes of my children as they faced it.

I took this opportunity to defeat the High Octorp for a second time.

Since the only witnesses were Auro and Argento, I didn't waste any time and activated my abilities, overlapping them so that I could immediately kill it.

However, before that, I made a vacuum membrane to cut off the sound so that it wouldn't reach them, because it was dangerous. In addition, I gave

them one of the items from Velvet's inheritance as insurance. I passed them each an 【Extra Life Ring】, a magic item which will disintegrate in exchange for nullifying a single attack that would instantly kill the target.

With the preparations complete, I launched a pre-emptive attack using 【Voice of Death】, which has a fixed chance to kill my enemy, and 【Black Demon's Roar】, which increases the power of my voice and allows it to cause negative ailments.

The sound of my voice was loud enough to surprise even me, causing the nearby stalactites to crumble into small fragments similar to sand, while the surrounding water also heaved violently as foam formed at its edges. The sound's volume was amplified as it echoed off of the surface of the rocks, causing the High Octorp to slowly fall forward when it heard my voice.

After it rattled to the ground with a splash, it stopped moving entirely. Did I win? Surprised, I took my halberd out of my item box and observed as I stabbed the High Octorp's body with the tip. I smelled the High Octorp's flesh burning as lightning came out from where I stabbed it, but it didn't appear to move.

This didn't change even though I left it alone for awhile. It looks like it probably died instantly.

【"Frontier Psalms" Condition to Clear 【Vesper Octorp】 Achieved: 【Solo

Kill】【Time Limit】【One Hit Kill】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Assigned Rare Skill: 【Master Vesper Exterminator】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Awarded 【Ancient】 Class Magic Item: 【Vesper's Mysterious Shield: Octorp】】

【Achiever Yatendouji is Awarded: 【Ordeal Breakthrough Celebratory Item】】

Hmmm, it looks like 【Vesper Slayer】, which I obtained last time, must have increased the chances for my attack to hit.

The rare skills that I have obtained through this world's laws, 【Three Steps of Destruction】、【One Who Eats the Living】、【Vesper Slayer】、【One Who Captures and Devours】 and so on, are fundamentally different from many of the abilities I got with 【Absorption】. Most of them are usually active.

While I'm certain that there are times when these abilities are inconvenient, since I can't control their activation myself once I've learned them, I'm sure I'll be surprised because of the unexpected results that will sometimes occur.

While thinking about whether that's a good thing or not, I collected the High Octorp's body, which is the third one I've obtained. Although there were fewer materials than last time, I also gathered the materials in the room that had been reproduced. Wondering whether we should return, I noticed that the look in Auro and Argento's eyes stiffened when I turned around.

There was suddenly an awkward silence between us and the strange look in both of their eyes was painful. Their eyes said that they were looking at something beyond their understanding. It wasn't the sort of look you'd show to your own father.

I wanted to get rid of this very uncomfortable feeling, so I let Auro and Argento attempt to defeat the High Octorp this time. I said, "You don't have to, but how about it?" Upon hearing me say they could give it a try, they both began to get strangely excited.

However, while it wouldn't be training if I joined them, the High Octorp isn't weak enough that it can be killed by two people that are inexperienced like they are.

Auro's magic gun had a lot of firepower since it could fire a great variety of magic bullets. The Tabarzin that I passed to Argento causes the wounds it inflicts to explode, but it's still greatly inferior in terms of overall ability.

They'd probably both be stung by the tentacles and be unable to act within a few minutes. Either that or they'd be caught by its octopus legs, killed and

then eaten.

For that reason, I used 【Lesser Summoning: Undead】 to create two Black Undead Knights and had them both act as support.

The party was Auro, who was fighting at long range even though she wasn't used to firing the great variety of magic bullets from the magic gun, with Argento attacking with his Tabarzin while shooting his silver partisans from mid-range. The two Black Undead Knights stayed close to the High Octorp the entire time, in order to attract its attention.

I sat at the entrance to the boss room, drinking elven wine while I observed the fight. Since I already taught them the High Octorp's weak points, as well as things they should watch out for, I think it'll be alright. However, I'll step in if it becomes necessary.

I had a few concerns, but they ended up being unnecessary. Among the two Black Undead Knights that took most of the attacks, one had been completely destroyed. Half of the remaining skeleton's body had also taken heavy damage and it was almost completely destroyed, as well. However, because they were protected by the skeletons, both of my children finished killing the boss without suffering any major injuries that could leave them impaired.

Although they weren't able to satisfy the conditions in the Frontier Psalm since it took them more than an hour, they were able to defeat a higher

ranking boss monster. This was because they were protected by a vanguard that was considerably stronger than they were.

This has great significance, as it seems they gained a huge amount of experience.

Lying down face up on the last level's wet floor, they were both fatigued and gasping for breath. However, their levels have risen considerably and Auro appears to have gained the 【Magic Gun User】 job, while Argento gained the 【Exploding Axe Wielder】 job.

Both of them have already acquired the 【Spearman】 and 【Archer】 jobs through their training, and they also inherited the 【Berserker】 and 【Grappler】 jobs from me.

Though each of their levels are still low, the large number of jobs they possess increases their strength to compensate. In the first place, because both of their bodies easily surpass a normal human's, the reinforcement rate from their job corrections can't be compared to those a human would receive.

Mixbloods, who have the characteristics of both a demi-human and a human, appear to have an obviously different rate at which their strength grows. Perhaps these two will surpass me in the future.

That's a nice possibility, since I believe that a child should surpass their parents. However, I don't intend to lose for the time being since my dignity as a parent is at stake.

Thinking that, I praised their growth as I collected the High Octorp's corpse. We returned to the surface by the shortest route, while I ate the black bones of the skeletons whose role was now finished.

Although it took some time because I had Auro and Argento fight the dungeon monsters that we encountered on our way out, we managed to make it out in time for dinner anyway.

While using what happened in the dungeon as material for a story, I thoroughly enjoyed today's fish dishes.

Since some alcohol that was inscribed with the name "Slime Sake: Kūforea" dropped from an Aqua Slime at some point on our way back, I took the opportunity to drink it during dinner, as well.

The reason why I drank it was that when I examined the Kūforea liquor we'd obtained with 【Detect Analyze】, the description said it went well with fish. My throat felt refreshed as I drank the sake, which was quite sweet and also had a sharp spiciness, as well. It seems that it really is alcohol that's suitable to drink with fish.

Day 164

Just after dawn, our main force arrived at a forest near the Labyrinth City Purgatory from our base in the forest.

Their numbers approached 400. It's a good number, but most of the members appear to be Goblins and Hobgoblins. The Tomboy Princess, who had been looking forward to the arrival of our main force, could not hide her disappointment.

Her behavior as she sat on my shoulder seemed to say, "Yes? Is he serious? No, I hope the goblins are a joke." She didn't say it out loud, but I felt that her eyes were voicing her complaints, anyway.

The Boy Knight and the other guards had a very similar reaction. They didn't say it clearly, but I could tell this was the case because I saw their shoulders drop as they hung their heads.

There are some strong races such as the Dullahan, Ogre and Dragonewt, but compared to the whole force they are too few in number for the time being. Since the hobgoblins and goblins, who made up more than half of the military force, were generally recognized as being weak, they didn't think it was acceptable. It's natural that they would think that they're unreliable.

The Tomboy Princess wants as much war potential as possible to meet the Strong Grandson and the rest of the Nobles Faction in the rebellion that will

happen soon. According to her, the Minister's death sabotaged this desire and caused them to have fewer allies than expected, so they urgently needed to reinforce their war potential.

It seems like the Strong Grandson and the others will make their move soon, since some of them are starting to get impatient. That's why her reaction can't be helped, since she was anticipating the force that I had prepared.

"I have no other choice, so I might as well," is how humans think. Well, since I hadn't said anything on purpose, she was imagining and expecting something better, which caused her to have a pretty bad reaction. If I didn't know any better, I'd have likely reacted the same way.

As the morning training that had already sublimated their nature began, the Tomboy Princess unintentionally smiled bitterly as she started to adjust her plans after calculating the current war potential. Her serious expression was different than what it usually is when she's on my shoulder.

Today, the cold winds were blowing as snow sporadically fell from the sky. Despite this, the group members' breath was visible as they put on the general uniform of our mercenary group, which was an overcoat that had been designed with all sorts of enchantments applied to it. They began training after they did their warm-up exercises.

As usual, the training method was actual combat. Since some injuries were

healed by the effects of the ear cuffs, their movements were intense. I guess it's too extreme to be called training.

Someone wasn't able to completely dodge the tip of an approaching sword, which ended up cutting their neck. Although they were bleeding quite a bit, their daring movements prevented their veins from being cut. Despite the fact that they were one step away from death, they counter-attacked using the weapon they were holding without faltering.

Their arm was also broken because of the force of a war hammer. Although they were tormented by the pain, they shut it out with willpower as they beat their opponent's body in revenge. A little distance away, someone let magic of the same rank collide, which spread destruction with a flash of light and a thunderous roar.

The magic was stopped with a shield that's a magic item. Although the owner of the shield's limbs were damaged in the aftermath of the attack, they advanced towards their opponent without stopping.

There was many-versus-many combination training that was led by someone with a high position as well, with people roaring as they fought each other. People were hit and blood was shed as they handled arts used by the human members using techniques that they'd forged themselves.

Although it was training, the situation could be called nothing but real combat. The Tomboy Princess and the others were distracted for a short

while as they stared in amazement at the figures that weren't afraid of death at all.

Humans with a normal state of mind would not be able to make this bloody training scene. Basically, what I'm saying is that I restructured and trained them so they could do so, though someone seeing it for the first time might be left speechless.

A lot of members might have died from injuries during training if we didn't have really great ways to heal them. I don't think this kind of training can normally be done.

Still, their reaction was amusing and Kanami and I laughed at the state of the Tomboy Princess and the rest of her group. When she noticed this, she started blushing as she shyly twisted her body.

My mercenary group's goblins are very different from normal goblins. Of course, the other members in the group are, as well. After boasting about it, I saw the Tomboy Princess make a face that seemed to say, "That's a saucy attitude for someone like you, Aporou."

Her cheeks were blushing and she was embarrassed, but she had a happy expression on her face. For now, we watched training for an hour and then had the main force wait for orders inside the forest as we returned to the Labyrinth City Purgatory.

After shooting a spy, I had my clones manipulate the atmosphere and other aspects of the area in order to prevent the light, noise and other such things from reaching the city. Since we came outside of the city under the pretense of a walk, it's necessary for us to return soon.

If someone's spy survives, they might think it's suspicious, but since I eliminated them beforehand I don't think that's the case.

Well, I doubt I need to worry, but we'll return to the Royal Capital tomorrow just in case. We spent our last day in the Labyrinth City Purgatory shopping and training. I allowed the others to enter a dungeon on the condition that they stayed on the upper levels, as well.

I tucked myself into my warm bed as I thought that the next chapter in my Book of Psalms might start soon...

【All starting conditions for World Psalms, [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon], Chapter 4: 【Encouragement of a Kingdom's Revolution】 have been cleared.

Releasing clear conditions for First Verse 【Hour of Obscurity (Revina Mass)】, Second Verse 【Positive Omen (Rulan Vera)】, Third Verse 【Song of the Beginning (Tiran Vich)】, Fourth Verse 【Rending Fang of the Eater (Berhan Gourd)】, Fifth Verse 【Old Man's Poisoning (Gilbert July)】, Sixth Verse 【Final Castle Crawl (Lulu Iera)】, Seventh Verse

【War Flames' Bullets (Evil Ballad)】, Eighth Verse 【Horse's Retreat (Totol Tyrol)】, Ninth Verse 【Hooves of the Destructive Axe (Aste Ruos)】, Tenth Verse 【Events of a Heroic Battle (Quatre Gatol)】, Eleventh Verse 【Demon's Perishing Wail (Seperia Apotol)】, and Final Verse 【Princess' Command (Rubiria Maüks)】.

Book of Psalms has already progressed from the First Verse 【Hour of Obscurity (Revina Mass)】 through the Fifth Verse 【Old Man's Poisoning (Gilbert July)】. All completion rewards cannot yet be obtained.

Provided that each of the remaining Verse's hidden conditions are cleared, it is still possible to obtain everything.

World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon], Chapter 4 【Advancing the Kingdom's Revolution】 Sixth Verse 【Final Castle Crawl (Lulu Iera)】 has already begun.

Good luck!】

There were no ≪ＹＥＳ≫ or ≪ＮＯ≫ options like there was before. Although it's slightly unexpected that it was forced this time, it shouldn't be much of a problem since the general preparations are complete.

Even so, have the announcements been gradually changing?

Day 165

Early in the morning, we returned to the Royal Capital using the skeleton carriages, with the same amount of members that we left with.

It would have been strange if the amount of members we returned with was different, but this isn't really a problem since the main force has already hidden in the Royal Capital's underground area.

Osvel is a relatively advanced city in this world. The citizens are able to live conveniently because they spent a lot of time and money to build an underground water supply and a sewer system, with guidance from the 【Sage from Another World】.

For that reason, it's no longer necessary for them to draw water from wells or rivers, since they can simply turn on the faucet for fresh water that can be immediately drunk. The restrooms which are the type that are flushed with water aren't understood, though.

However, he honestly wanted to make a simpler structure, but the Royal Capital was very large and had many buildings that were already completed. It seems that the 【Sage from Another World】 did not have much specialized knowledge himself.

They were both set up underground with steady effort, and as a result of delicate curving and even slight mistakes, a complicated path was made

which was similar to a labyrinth. It was so complex that if an unskilled person entered it, they would get lost without having a clue where they were.

On top of that, it's quite dangerous since there are monsters, including several species of rats, that have settled in there and can show up out of nowhere, such as:

- "Iron Rat," a rat that's approximately the size of a small dog, with hair and teeth that are as hard as iron.
- "Chain Explosion Rat," a rat that is harmless, but has a troublesome trait where they will gather into a group if one of them is killed. When one is killed, they set off a small explosion that will cause a chain reaction if nothing is done to stop it.
- "Bugs Rat," a rat that possesses the distinctive traits of various bugs, such as a hornet's stinger that has a powerful poison and a bombardier beetle's ability to release high temperature benzoquinone gas.
- "Trash Slime," a slime that grows by taking in garbage and sewage.
- "Trash Mamba," a monster that's covered in filth and swims in the sewage.
- And so on...

However, even though they're dangerous, these monsters prefer the darkness, so as long as their numbers remain low they are unlikely to appear above ground. There's been no evidence up to this point of a resident of the Royal Capital being attacked by these monsters, so long as

they don't enter the underground, that is.

For that reason, the general public is never allowed to approach the underground complex.

Having said that, it's not a particularly uncommon occurrence for children that are playing to enter the underground, only to later be discovered as corpses or pieces of meat. It also appears as though abandoned and unwanted children are often left there on purpose.

Normally, only adventurers enter the underground, since they regularly receive requests to exterminate the monsters there to keep their population down.

It's a very welcoming place for those people doing shady things, though.

On top of gathering the abandoned children like they're pieces of merchandise, many scoundrels have made their homes here so they can perform many illegal activities that can't be done on the surface.

Organizations of various sizes have hideouts in every sector and they're usually at peace with each other because of an agreement similar to a scoundrel's pact. It seems that there are periodic turf wars every few months, though. This makes the dangerous underground an even more dangerous place, but lets ignore that for now.

I've been searching the underground with my clones to see if it would be of any use to me, and as a by-product I'm able to freely hunt in most areas for the foreign spies that are secretly moving around.

Although there was originally a hideout for an organization that made their living by buying and selling certain drugs, I crushed them since they were of no use to the Tomboy Princess. This caused their hideout to become an unused space.

Since the unattended rooms were quite clean, it would be a shame not to use them, so I decided to use it to hide our main force for now.

That being said, I decided to entrust the various expansion projects, which will become necessary as the main force's numbers increase, to the group members from our forest base with experience doing this sort of work.

They are currently working diligently to make it easier to live underground.

By the way, it's not like the Royal Capital's guards are useless.

However, for not noticing an army of 400 entering the Royal Capital, it would be easy for someone to say that they were. That being the case, since I dug out a direct route beneath the walls, there was no way they could have known about it. I would be surprised if they discovered it.

Well, this may have been a trivial story. For the time being, we should wait until the fish takes the bait, so I decided to enjoy the moment as I calmly waited for them to do so.

Day 166

After a long absence, the palace guards' training was restarted today, since that was the original request that we received from the Tomboy Princess.

Because they had done the training that I had decided on before we left for the Labyrinth City Purgatory without skipping out on it, they all seemed to have fewer useless movements.

However, there's one thing that's been on my mind. It seems like there's a clear difference between the group that stayed behind in the Amber Palace and those that followed the Tomboy Princess as her guards. It was only a difference of a few days, but their strength's improvement rate was obviously not the same.

The reason for this difference is not because of the change in physical abilities from leveling. Although there were certainly people whose level had increased, it was within the margin of error since at best they had only leveled once or twice.

On top of the weight and speed of their attacks being clearly different, the strength of their Combat Arts was as well. This might be clear evidence for the effectiveness of the changes I cause to my surroundings.

It's been fairly difficult to compare subjects so far since some of them have been subject to these changes from the time they were born or they didn't

have an opponent that I could compare them with. That being said, since I haven't done a serious investigation on its nature yet, I decided to use various methods to study it since this was the perfect opportunity to do so.

Even though it was troublesome, I set aside whether or not the figures were truly accurate and spent a significant amount of time thinking about many things.

In the evening, we decided to use the High Octorp for today's dinner. As far as I can tell, although the time limit has been extended, the possibility of learning something from them decreases if they're left for too long, so it might be a good idea to eat them today.

Since there are four bodies available, I decided to have the first one barbecued exclusively for myself. The second one was finely cut into sashimi, while the third one was turned into tempura. The fourth one was turned into various dishes that we felt like cooking.

Although I only understood it after eating the High Octorp, there appears to be a big difference in taste depending on which part of it you eat.

Its state made it so that the octopus legs tasted like octopus, the right claw tasted like crab, the left hand tasted like a sea urchin, the tentacles on its back were sweet like something gelatinous, and the shark head tasted like shark meat.

However, I was the only one that was able to eat the shell since it was too hard. As one would expect of a boss monster, its entire body was made of first-class ingredients.

Ability learned: 【Tentacle Creation】

Ability learned: 【Lorenzini Organ】

Ability learned: 【Shell of Hard Dense Chitin】

Ability learned: 【Sharpened Shark Skin】

Ability learned: 【Improved Cutting Power】

Ability learned: 【Black Octopus Ink that Should be Avoided】

It's been a long time since I was able to learn six abilities.

- 【Tentacle Creation】 is an ability that allows me to create tentacles that are like those on the High Octorp's back.
- 【Lorenzini Organ】 is an ability that acts like the organ in a shark that senses electrical currents.

- 【Shell of Hard Dense Chitin】 is an ability that can potentially reinforce the exoskeletons that I can equip with 【Equip Exoskeleton】, such as 【Red Bear Beast King's Prestige】 and 【Jade Eagle King's Flight】.
- 【Sharpened Shark Skin】 is an ability that makes your skin rough like a shark's skin.
- 【Improved Cutting Power】 is an ability that does exactly what it says.
- 【Black Octopus Ink that Should be Avoided】 is an ability that, according to the information, seems to allow me to spit out octopus ink that causes negative ailments.

Since there were several strong abilities among them, I thought that it would probably be more efficient to aim my hunting towards killing boss monsters from now on.

Day 167

Recently, there has been confusion among the foreign spies in the Royal Capital.

Although I say that, the biggest cause of it has been me.

To be honest, I've been chasing down spies for a while. In the morning, I'd collect information about them using my clones; specifically their appearance, age, affiliation, equipment, and current location. Then, after night fell, I'd hunt them down under the cover of darkness.

【Recognition Difficulty】, 【Kidnap】, and 【Wiretapping】 are very useful at during this time period. Unlike 【Recognition Difficulty】, there aren't many situations where 【Kidnap】 can be used, but I can still appreciate the ability since it's very useful in this particular setting.

At certain times, there are some things that can be unexpectedly useful. I guess eating a lot is a good idea, after all. The reason why I stubbornly hunted the spies was so that I could gather information.

After all, there's a limit to the amount of information that can be gathered about the other countries while I'm in the Royal Capital. In addition, it's better if I ask the professionals so that I can hear inside stories from the people that know them. Many of the stories were quite interesting, including ones about the shady affairs of foreign nobles.

Not only that, the spies are also excellent food. Although I haven’t learned anything new yet, they are useful for leveling the abilities that I already possess. As one might expect, powerful abilities have various uses.

However, realizing the dangers of being in the Royal Capital right now, the number of spies temporarily retreating to their country has increased. Although they were not given any orders to do so, their ability to perceive danger made them run away.

When I went to the Labyrinth City Purgatory for a few days, their numbers decreased more than I expected. Truthfully, I had planned to carefully reduce their numbers in secret. However, considering the current situation, I decided that I would hunt them down all at once before they all get the chance to leave.

Good grief, things aren't progressing as easily as I thought.

Having made up my mind, I hunted down 34 people once night fell and most of the people outside disappeared. I crushed several bases and gave my thanks as I collected the illegal goods that they had gathered through unlawful means. The written documents describing the magic items and circumstances of the Kingdom’s nobles were left behind, though.

A substantial amount of time and effort must have been placed in gathering goods, information, and food. With the hunt finished, it was already midnight

by the time I thought about returning to the Amber Palace. Most of the Royal Capital was silent and covered in darkness.

My breath was visible as the stars were shining in the night sky. As the fresh air was cold enough to make one shiver, there were many signs that people had already fallen asleep.

Although the surrounding scenery and the civilization's technological level is completely different, I can say that it feels similar to the night I was killed by Aoi, for some reason. I wonder what's happening to her right now. I don't really harbor any anger or resentment towards Aoi even though she killed me, but I’m worried that she might have been caught by the police for murder and thrown in prison.

Well, there's no way for me to find out, so I guess it’s useless to think about it. While walking in the streets and thinking about things, someone rose up behind the scenes. Just like a ghost, they quietly stood there in the darkness.

Day 168

Morning training was completed without any problems, so I decided to spend the afternoon in the Amber Palace learning more about this world.

Although I've been extensively using my clones and my own body to gain knowledge concerning this world, there's still an overwhelming number of things I don't know about.

I guess it's only natural that there are many things I don't know about though, since it hasn’t even been half a year since I was reincarnated.

At any rate, as expected of the heart of the Sternbild Kingdom, I'm grateful that I'm able to read the many valuable books, magic books and so on that are here. The Tomboy Princess arranged my visit, and because the books and documents in the Sternbild Kingdom's National Library were excellent references, I was able to make good progress in my studies.

I was able to easily learn information that could be put to good use in the future by investigating things such as the characteristics of each country and a general idea of their war potential, information on the personalities of Heroes and 【Great Heroes】 and their weapons, trends and specialties of each region and the dungeons within them, legal systems and their laws, cooking methods for delicious food, and so on.

As I thought, although I had gathered some information about this world

from Redhead, Blacksmith-san and the others, if I want to learn more detailed information about it, I'll have to borrow certain books from the library.

While I read a book, I enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere as I watched Auro and Argento study next to me.

Moments like these are nice. Our target took the bait tonight, so we decided to enter the underground without being noticed.

Day 170

At night, while the stars shine down on the world.

While there were some people scattered around the Royal Castle, there was another group sneaking around. They were a group consisting of a thoroughly trained elite Goblin and some Ninja Kobolds who specialized in covert operations. In their hands were either matted daggers made of mithril or Ninja Swords, which are living body weapons.

On their bodies they wore black armor that increases their hiding effectiveness, which was made of black bones. Only the exterior of the armor was able to move. Like this, they didn't speak as they moved in search of prey, but instead used hand signals and eye contact to communicate in secrecy.

With their ability as spies having been greatly enhanced, their goal was the Nobles Faction's private army.

They edged up behind the enemy, who was on the lookout for suspicious characters as they walked the corridors of the Royal Castle, and silenced them by cutting their throat. Because their experienced movements were carried out silently, not even someone standing in the hallway several meters ahead of them would have taken notice.

The corpse of the target they hunted was put in a body bag and brought

back with them, without leaving a single drop of blood behind. Although they're like skilled assassins, they aren't related to the Nobles Faction. When a common soldier passes by as they're doing their work, they hide themselves without doing anything.

They're able to naturally get into a soldier's blind spot by using the cover of a pillar to hide themselves. Those among them that are particularly skilled can change the shape of the exterior armor's black bones so they can cling to the ceiling. These occurrences are unusual, though.

Like this, the hunting continued until daybreak. In total, more than fifty of their private soldiers went missing. The soldiers were never found, but the bodies of ten nobles were discovered instead.

They were not nobles that had a strong influence like the Old Sly Fox and the Strong Grandson, but they were able to affect the lower seats. The corpses of the nobles were discovered by their maids when they went to wake them, and their strange appearance made it likely that they were killed using the same poison that killed the Minister.

Although they let their greatest enemy escape, since they had taken control of the majority of the Kingdom, the people that belonged to the Nobles Faction were somewhat careless. These assassinations that occurred will cause them to remember the casual murder of the Minister, reawakening the terror that they had started to forget.

In response, some people quietly returned to their territory, while others tried to escape from the heavy pressure with alcohol and women. There were also some who were furious at the killings and sneered excitedly that the killer should kill them if they can. Their reactions varied, yet the commonly held fear was hard to express.

For the time being, the nobles were not foolish. They had a rough idea who the criminal was. They thought it was the black Apostle Lord that was employed by the Tomboy Princess. He had displayed his combat ability in the arena, so they thought that he had the potential to penetrate the guard network around the Minister's residence.

However, they had no evidence. It was not possible for them to conclude that he is a limitless criminal. For that reason, they thought they had to take into consideration the fact that it might be a different criminal.

This confused and disturbed them, since the nobles did not have the means to deduce the correct answer.

A report was delivered at this point saying that the Tomboy Princess had rose up in order to command an army. Although she was able to escape from the Strong Grandson, they didn't think that kind of information would show up within one day.

Since they were certain the Tomboy Princess was within the Amber Palace until just before the coup d'état, she must have gotten hold of the

information beforehand.

It should have been a three day ride on a horse in order to arrive at the home of the Duke that was on friendly terms with the Tomboy Princess. It was simply unimaginable to do it in one day.

That's why the subordinate who gave him the report was cross-examined many times by the Strong Grandson, who asked him, "That's impossible, are you sure the information isn't mistaken?" However, it didn't take long before he was convinced that if it was the princess, it was possible for her to have done so.

He thought so because she had inherited the blood of the founder of the nation, King Rorgis, in which dwells the ability to read the minds of others.

However, the blood's power has weakened over the years to the point that most of the current members of the royal family have lost this ability. There are a few exceptions, but most of them must have direct contact in order to read the other party's mind, otherwise it will be an inaudible whisper that they can't understand.

The few exceptions to this are the Tomboy Princess and the First Queen.

The First Queen is able to read the thoughts of the people she's seen with her own eyes.

However, reading the part of the mind that holds a person's cleverly hidden intentions is difficult, since it is possible to provide false information with enough effort. This does not change the fact that it is still a wonderful ability, though.

He's facing off against the Tomboy Princess though, who is said to be a 【Throwback】 that's gifted with an unusual power which is exceedingly close to that of Founder King Rorgis, who was a 【Satori Mixblood】.

It could be said that the power that is able to read the deep recesses of its target's mind merely by seeing or recognizing them was way too strong.

Because she was born with this unusual power, as well as 【God of Judgement's Divine Protection】, she was confined in a tower without taking a single step outside until she was twelve years old. The princess had no freedom, though she was carefully raised to have a very important career.

Since she was chained to others from birth, she ended up seeing both the beautiful and filthy sides of many people, and as a result she became warped.

That's why she became a tomboy and manipulated others from the shadows. Although she was a princess of the royal family, she was determined to secure her own freedom, even if it destroyed the Kingdom in

the process.

For that reason, he thought that if it was the Tomboy Princess, it might be possible for her to predict the coup d'état beforehand. Although his plans were strictly hidden, the Strong Grandson came to the conclusion that it may have been possible for them to be leaked in some way.

He thought this because she meant to overturn the way things are in the Sternbild Kingdom for the sake of her own freedom, which she wanted for her own convenience.

Even though he felt irritation towards the unusual power left by her distant ancestor, the Strong Grandson earnestly made preparations to attack the Tomboy Princess' private army.

Founder King Rorgis

The Sternbild Kingdom was built by a person that was a Mixblood that possessed the 【Legendary Hero】 job, which is a rare job that combines the traits of the 【Hero】 and 【Great Hero】 jobs.

Rorgis' mother, the 【Great Hero】 Ruskatia, was known as the 【Defender of War Souls】. It's said that she used a battle axe to reclaim around half of the current Sternbild Kingdom's territory during a dark age when monsters that were more powerful than today's monsters were prevalent.

Rorgis' father was considered a 【Disaster Designated Individual】 class monster, born into the world as a result of a 【Mountain God】 that was defeated during 【Eschatology: War and Conquest】 losing all of its divine power and falling into ruin, becoming known as 【Fallen God： Old Man in the Mountain's Shadow】. At that point, a figure similar to an ape man was produced out of his own flesh and blood, as well as his brain, creating the mind reader, 【Satori】.

It seems that Ruskatia and Satori encountered each other on the battlefield.

Many people gathered because of the 【Great Hero】 Ruskatia, becoming her companions. Before long, new children were born from them. Since monsters that were more powerful than today's monsters were prevalent, humans were limited in what living provisions they could acquire. However, the solidarity of her companions was strong.

For that reason, there were many conflicts between humans. They were easier to kill than monsters, and for that reason alone there were many wars.

There, after traversing the hot sands of the desert, passing over mountains and through forests, 【Satori】 arrived from an island nation in the far east, which existed across the ocean. Satori, who had a very tough body and was quite ferocious, also inherited the regrets of his creator, the 【Great God：■■■】, who supported the world in accordance with the direction they

decided on.

It's said that aside from his ability to read minds, he had a body that was no less than four meters tall and the bristles that grew on it had a hardness equal to dragon scales, while his movements could surpass the speed of sound.

That sort of Satori intruded in the war that occurred between Ruskatia and another tribe.

The war ended after three days and nights when Ruskatia beheaded their leader. The damage done by the Satori to Ruskatia's companions that participated in the war was enormous, though the damage the other tribe they were fighting suffered almost completely destroyed them.

Ruskatia became pregnant due to a spurt of the Satori's blood. Though it's not certain why she gave birth to Rorgis, her sworn enemy's child, but the circumstances caused the two to become one.

However, Ruskatia had lost the ability to fight on her own, so instead she trained Rorgis so that he could fight on his own. This is the story that was carved into a lithograph that's passed down among the royal family. Well, that's the long and short of it, anyway.

Should I now summarize the events of the entire day so that they're easy to

understand?

The private soldiers of the Strong Grandson, as well as several nobles, were assassinated. This has caused uneasiness to spread among those in the Nobles Faction.

Information that the Tomboy Princess is raising a private army reached them. However, it's only half true. I've been in contact with allies of the Duke's Uncle through the use of a communication demon, a clone that specializes in information transmission, because the Uncle has come to the Royal Capital leading an army. The Tomboy Princess is currently underground.

The Strong Grandson believes that more than half of the information is true. This is because he knows of the various things that the Tomboy Princess, who has been confined until just recently, did behind the scenes for the sake of her own freedom.

I'm currently preparing the troops to meet the enemy. There's a group of us underground that are awaiting orders to sneak into their ranks. The flesh of the private army is amazing.

Well, I wonder what this feeling is?

There were various things that the Tomboy Princess has done behind the

scenes to gain her freedom, such as; skillfully inciting people to commit crimes, using the injustice she discovered to bully people into doing something for her, leaking people's adultery to their wives in order to tear their appearance to shreds, and so on and so forth.

The earnest desire for freedom which overflowed from her heart was distorted by her lifelong imprisonment, which caused her power to read minds to completely manifest itself. The Minister feared this power and, seeing it as a hindrance, recklessly tried to have her kidnapped and assassinated, which resulted in him suffering the consequences.

She was forced to read the minds of others too often, which caused her mental age and thinking ability to rise. However, since experience does not accompany this growth, she seems to make basic mistakes unexpectedly.

That being said, her mind reading ability doesn't work on me for some reason, and its effectiveness is low for the other members of my group.

Therefore, even if she knows my real nature, it's a trivial matter at this point. With the exception of her mind reading and her somewhat special skill, she's just a frail and beautiful girl of suitable age, so there shouldn't be a problem.

The relationship between us is that of an employer to an employee. Although it's uncertain how long this relationship will last, but it's going reasonably well so far, isn't it?

Anyway, since our plans for today were somewhat different from usual, I was tired and went to lie down.

Starting tomorrow, I intend to frequently reduce the enemy's forces like I did today.

Day 171

There were no strong winds outside, and as the dark night spread out before us in silence, white snow fell and piled up.

After the date had changed, although there were still several hours before the sun rose, we devoted approximately two hours to covert operations within the Royal Castle just like the other day.

Just like we did last time, those who excelled at covert operations, such as the Ninja Kobolds and the goblins from my generation with small builds, slipped into the Royal Castle under the cover of darkness. Their work was simple, with the aim of gradually reducing the Nobles Faction's private soldiers by having them disappear while they were patrolling.

Of course, I didn't do such troublesome and roundabout work. I was in the secret basement mass-producing clones, which can be treated as expendable troops. If I were to keep creating Black Skeletons and Black Ogres, I might be able to easily crush the Strong Grandson to death with an overwhelming number of them.

Since I can supply myself with magic by using 【Absorb Magic】 to absorb it from the darkness, my internal magic supply is nearly endless, unless I act very rashly. In the first place, it's been proven that I'm able to prepare approximately 5,000 black skeletons using just my internal magic supply.

I'm not worried about materials either, since I can easily secure water for my clones.

I was cooperating with Kanami-chan, who has the 【Intermediate Summoning: Undead】 ability, in order to summon several Black Skeleton Commanders. They're a higher ranking species of Black Skeleton, whose summoning restrictions are lifted by consuming one of its kind. If I were to do this alone, a moderate amount of time would be necessary, but it is feasible enough to prepare more than 10,000 soldiers through synthesis with her help.

The black skeletons that the Commanders summon are an uncertain factor, since their attributes deteriorate across the board when compared with the ones I have summoned. I also have to take into account that, since most of them are undead, even if I were to prepare 10,000 soldiers, most of them would quickly disappear once the sun starts to rise.

However, despite all of that, they still adequately satisfy the standards necessary for them to be treated as expendable troops. It's not necessary for us to pay too much attention to this weakness though, since it's still several hours before the sun rises.

For that reason alone, it's very easy to pulverize the opponent with an overwhelming number of forces.

Since 【Fire】, 【Holy Light】 and 【Blunt Force】 from blunt weapons are

all well known weaknesses of monsters of the skeleton variety, they're likely to be dealt with immediately, so the number of skeletons alone will be helpful.

Even if they were to adopt measures to oppose them, if 10,000 Black Skeleton ranked monsters were to launch a surprise attack from the inside, there aren't any fortresses that would not fall.

That's why, since the core of the enemy, the Strong Grandson and Sly Old Fox, have gathered in one place, I have no doubt that this is the perfect opportunity to launch an attack on them.

Although most of the main force, such as Minokichi-kun, Supesei-san, Asue-chan and Gurufu-chan aren't here, our forces are still above a certain level. We can replenish them by mass-summoning more troops, as well.

That's why I chose a strategy that slowly erodes their forces from the inside, since it's almost always a combination of strategy and the current situation that allows one to obtain victory.

The main reason this method was selected is because it suited what my employer, the Tomboy Princess, wanted.

The pretext for this is––

『I want you to keep the damage to the castle to a minimum. Since it's a symbol of the Kingdom, I want you to do as much as you can to avoid defiling it with blood, as well as destroying it with your absurd power. When it comes to the Strong Grandson, it won't end with just a simple assassination, you know. You don't need to take them directly head-on, but it's necessary to make it known both on the inside and the outside that their troops suffered a crushing defeat.』

––or so I was told.

I certainly understand what she's getting at, but that's difficult for us.

For the Tomboy Princess, she has her honor as a blood relative of those standing at the Sternbild Kingdom's summit to uphold.

It's necessary for her to display far and wide that she possesses the military power to force the nobles that rebelled to yield, but it cannot be done in such a way that will cause her to be treated with contempt.

Since they have gained control of the Royal Castle and nearly all members of the royal family, it might be possible for them to have an impact on the future of the Sternbild Kingdom's administration. For that reason, even if we assassinated the top members of the Nobles Faction that caused the coup d'etat, it's very likely that those who remain will not give up yet and will begin to act recklessly.

If that happens, it will inevitably become troublesome.

Once they've been delivered a crushing defeat, it'll be necessary to clearly determine the outcome. Otherwise, after the civil war ends and we leave, the nobles will end up having more power than they currently do and a coup d'etat will be more likely to occur again.

Most importantly, their reckless actions will influence the Sternbild Kingdom's territories and cause quite a bit of unrest. There would be an increase in the occurrence of thieves and barbarians as well, possibly coming from other countries. On top of all of that, allies of other nations might use this opportunity to create chaos so that neighboring countries, such as the Kirika Empire and so on, can attempt to use various pretexts to divide and rule the Sternbild Kingdom.

Since the very young, cute and scheming Princess intends to become the Kingdom's ruler, she wants to avoid this.

These are my employer's intentions, so it can't be helped.

The Tomboy Princess thoroughly surrounded the exterior of the Royal Capital with the powerful forces of the Duke's family, which are mostly made up of many 【Infantry】, 【Cavalry】 which ride beasts such as war horses, and so on. There were various branches of service in his army, and they numbered approximately 5,000 in total. While his forces were threatening and putting pressure on the rebels from the outside, we were poking around

inside as we worked hard to reduce their forces and create distrust amongst them.

I'll be surprised if their morale doesn't fall after this, but if it doesn't happen, I will have no choice but to recognize the leadership ability of the Strong Grandson and his allies.

Well, since the current situation is progressing without any problems, I don't think any mistakes will be made.

Currently, the Royal Castle is packed with a maximum of around 3,000 of the Strong Grandson's troops. Although there are many more forces prepared and on standby in the territories of the Nobles, this is how many exist within the castle.

There are always around 300 of the most elite of them guarding the key people within the 【Nobles Faction】, such as the Strong Grandson and Sly Old Fox.

Even the weakest of these 300 possess at least three battle system 【Jobs】, so their overall combat ability is quite high. This makes them at least equal to the Rusty Iron Knight when he led his forces into the vast forest that was our birthplace, with only the influential people being stronger than him.

Many of these people carry the 【Divine Protection of a Demigod】, though there are a few that carry the 【Divine Protection of a God】, as well.

If I were to say more, some are almost 【Heroes】 and 【Great Heroes】 and may possibly be 【Legendary Heroes in the Making】. To speak badly of them, 【Heroes】 and 【Great Heroes】 are chosen because of their superior abilities and the fact that a 【God】 is fond of their personality, so those who don't have strong willpower fail to become one.

Thanks to the results of this talented group's habitual training, they've become one huge group that won't have their coordinated movements disturbed. For this reason, it can't be helped that it will be a tough fight.

If I don't use group members that are stronger than Black Skeletons against them, there's a high possibility that I won't be able to kill them.

If I pressure them with an overwhelming amount of skeletons, something along the lines of 100 or 1,000 per individual, it shouldn't be impossible to crush them by attacking relentlessly without giving them time to coordinate their attacks. I'll need to be careful though, since there will be a pointless increase in damage if we simply take a brute force approach.

Well, I'm thankful that their movements will be easy to read, since they aren't likely to stray far from the Strong Grandson and his allies.

Although the roughly 2,700 remaining soldiers have all reached at least a certain level thanks to their daily training, they don't seem to be as strong as the rest.

We can reduce the damage if I put pressure on them with at least two Black Skeletons per person, while at the same time easily killing their weaker members.

It would be nice for us to defeat them head-on using a difference in our number of forces, but we won't waste such a plan here.

Of course, the enemy's weapons, coordination, topography and affinity may make for some difficult fights, but I think it's alright to conclude that they shouldn't be a threat unless there's a large incident.

Even if it's not possible to kill them with my Black Skeletons, I can disregard the damage to the Royal Castle and, as a last resort, use my 【Human Bomb】 ability at the same time as my skeletons to change humans or humanoid monsters into bombs in order to win the battle.

It makes me shiver when I put myself in my opponent's shoes since, among other things, I could turn groups of Black Skeletons into bombs and have them explode with a high probability of killing the people within a diameter of several meters.

Although the Black Skeletons alone may make it troublesome for the enemy, when they think the skeletons have been defeated they will suddenly create an explosion that is difficult for them successfully defend against. On top of that, there will be a higher number of black bones that are sent flying at the time of the explosion. The damage from this should not be taken lightly.

The black bones that had exploded and scattered would disappear a short time later, and if they are plugging up someone's wounds when they do so, the possibility of the person dying from blood loss if they aren't quickly treated increases. This isn't any consolation, though.

Even though I would carry out this plan myself, I most likely wouldn't see the results as anything but tragic.

Of course, even though the bombs are capable of randomly exploding as long as the conditions are met, when I take into consideration the risk and return of using this tactic, I still wouldn't hesitate to do so.

For that reason, it's certainly not the the enemy forces' 300 elite soldiers that I need to be the most wary of.

What I should be most wary of are the two Heroes that are lending their power to the Nobles Faction for their own reasons, as well as the nine people that are their 【Companions／Sub-Cast】.

The Rock Hero, who has a long military record and has survived many battlefields, is lending them his assistance in order to return a favor that he received from the dead Minister personally. However, I can say with confidence that he is the most troublesome of the two, since he thinks that I'm the criminal that killed the Minister. Still, if I look at the whole picture, the Water Hero is quite an uncertain factor in the war, since he is fighting for the sake of his family that's being held hostage.

Well, perhaps I should say that he's dangerous, instead.

The Water Hero was originally a farmer just like Avenger. His family appears to have been cultivating an inferior plot of land, and it was difficult for them to grow crops. For that reason, there was not a surplus for his family and he appears to have lived a considerably poor life since childhood. Despite this, his family and their neighbors cooperated with one another and they were somehow able to survive.

However, when the Water Hero was ten years old, the Lord that governs the land collected more taxes than usual, which caused poverty to accelerate as he took advantage of his position to fill his own pockets with money.

The Water Hero that was always poor, his family, and the villagers who survived by cooperating with one another were in a troubled state over what to eat that day. When times were at their worst, they would chew on the roots of the withered grass in order to survive.

However, one day he received the 【Divine Protection of a God】, which caused his life to improve just like Avenger's had. After some time passed, he went to attend a school in the Royal Capital.

As a result of his vigorous work every day so that he could support his family, he graduated with very good grades. He entered the military after that and officially became the 【Hero of Quivering Water】 shortly afterwards. Then, using his own influence, he killed the Lord that had tormented him and his family with his own hands.

When he did so, he made sure to torment the Lord with a small taste of the suffering that they had gone through by slowly cutting the tips of his hands and feet off, while only giving him the bare minimum amount of food and water necessary to survive. I heard that the Water Hero put the Lord through a lot of torture, keeping him on the border between life and death.

To sum it up in a few words, the Water Hero has a fairly extreme nature, which doesn't match his ordinary appearance. I realize that I'm repeating this, but the reason the Water Hero serves the country is so that he can support his family.

Therefore, he has no loyalty at all for the country and the royal family. Instead, he might even feel hatred towards them and as a result, probably wouldn't have a problem killing them.

It seems he'll do anything if it's for work, so the Water Hero is said to have

the role of removing the Sternbild Kingdom's obstacles head-on, whereas the Dark Hero does so from the shadows.

Typical of personalities like the Water Hero's, he will struggle to the death for the sake of saving his precious family. For that reason, I guess it's not very hard to imagine him coming to kill the Tomboy Princess.

This is because one of the opponent's victory conditions is her death.

By the way, given that the Water Hero's specialty is widespread attacks that make use of vibrating water, I'm certain that he would completely eradicate the Black Skeletons if he acted violently in the places where they had gathered together unskillfully.

If I'm not stingy with my abilities for the time being and I pair up with Kanami, I'm confident that we could completely defeat both of the 【Hero】's parties, even if we fought them at the same time. However, the fight will definitely drag on if we do that, and there's no way of knowing what would happen on the battlefield.

There's no way it would feel good if we were tripped up by an unexpected occurrence, though.

For the time being, it's been decided that the only people holding these guys back are the two of us. Since that's the case, I'll set this matter aside for

now and focus on adapting to the circumstances we find ourselves in.

With the exception of the Heroes, the Strong Grandson and his allies most likely have a trump card, though I can't describe it since I have yet to confirm its existence.

I'm not sure why I thought they had one, but if the Heroes alone are normally enough, then it's probably safe to say that the probability of that being the case is low.

As long as an unexpected wild card doesn't appear, I think that things should progress more or less as I planned, but it's hard to say what will actually happen in the end.

If they do have a trump card, I think we'll probably still be able to pull it off with the same tactic we're using for the others, but I'm going to be cautious about it so that this doesn't result in a loss for us.

I don't think we'll make progress very easily, but it's for the best if they don't have anything like that.

Well, that should give a rough idea of the enemy's war potential and their current status, anyway.

Now, about work. For the time being, since the Strong Grandson and his

allies understood that the morale of the soldiers and nobles would be affected if the assassinations continued, they began to adopt various countermeasures against them.

The soldiers patrolling the Royal Castle at night had assembled into groups of three, according to the instructions that they had previously been given. The standard group was three people, but they assembled into groups of five when there were cowardly nobles with them, and there were sporadic instances of ten soldiers grouping together in order to go around with large families, as well.

In addition, the last time we were here, the heavy security that was spread around the Royal Castle was wearing protective gear that was close to cloth armor, which had a gaudy appearance that emphasized that it was ornamental. However, they would die with that sort of armor, so their gear was upgraded and they were now wearing metal body armor, hand and wrist guards, and so on.

As one would expect, since it would make them sluggish during these times, people aren't equipping the troublesome metal armor from head to toe just to work. Instead, they appear to have substituted the missing pieces with accessories such as earrings and rings, which are magic items that possess abilities that increase a person's defensive capabilities.

Suspended at the soldier's waist are a longsword and dagger, and in one hand they held a magic item which had a shape similar to a compass

combined with a lantern, which plays a role similar to a motion sensor and also emits light.

According to the Boy Knight, this magic item appears to be called a "Beacompass." It's quite an expensive item, but its performance is guaranteed. As for the Beacompass' characteristics, it doesn't just detect moving things, but it also appears to react to the life force of creatures. It's only effective in a 180 degree arc in front of the item though, since it excludes the item's owner and people that are behind them from being counted as enemy targets when it searches.

For that reason, it's very difficult to conceal oneself from it.

Nevertheless, even though their body was wrapped in a substantial amount of equipment, they were staring intensely at the Beacompass' needle with bloodshot eyes every time there was the slightest movement of the needle point. They would then let out a sigh of relief the moment they understood that it was just the wind causing the tree leaves to move. However, the hand that they always had on their sword's hilt was trembling slightly out of fear.

They looked just like people that were in a situation where they were being hunted, though this actually was the case.

This is because a decisive opening is created when they depend on a magic item to search for their enemy instead of their own senses.

In response to this, I put a group of six people on the enemy's standard groups of three.

Although the Beacompass is an excellent item for detecting moving objects and living things, the item's structure makes it difficult for its needle to move up and down. This is because it's normally enough for it to simply detect horizontal movement.

For that reason, in the thin shadows that occurred in the corners of the passage's high ceiling, there were people wearing armor called 【Black Bone Living Mail】, which is created by weaving together durable cloth and the bodies of three Black Skeletons with 【Bone Union】. When they use the armor's eight spider-like legs that had grown on its back to cling to the ceiling, the reaction from the Beacompass becomes very weak.

Once we knew of this weak point, it was a simple matter to make use of surprise attacks to hunt them without making a single sound.

Having said that, if a soldier had used their own senses to search for the enemy, they should have been able to hear the small noises that the rubbing of the bone armor made as it moved, as well as the breathing of the goblins.

However, because they were only relying on the Beacompass, their ability to search for the enemy had been reduced. I have to say I've had just about enough of challenging people whose awareness hasn't increased at all.

Nevertheless, with our people acting in groups of six, they weren't able to hunt the same number of targets in the same amount of time as before. This can't be helped though, since the enemy's true colors have yet to be seen.

For that reason, from our work this time, approximately thirty six private soldiers from the Royal Castle quietly disappeared from this world. There were six nobles who had private residences in the Royal Capital that were killed in their homes with the same poison that killed the Minister, as well.

Just like before, the poisoned nobles were not major people like the Strong Grandson, people that depended on reading the situation themselves, people that joined in because of the decree of the leaders of families that are affiliated with the Nobles Faction, or people that reluctantly joined because of a friendly invitation or something along those lines. Instead, they were people that had been added to the lower ranks for various reasons.

Incidentally, there was advanced notice of the next murder written on the carpet that was spread over the floor where the bodies of the nobles had fallen, on the luxurious clothes that they were wearing, or on the walls where there were traces of blood because they had been leaned on. These notices, which were written in dark red paint that was a mix of the noble's blood and a special material, said, "Who on earth will become the next sack of poison?"

The notices stood out even if it was dark because the special material that

was mixed into the paint made it shine mysteriously. As time passed their blood dripped and formed tracks, creating an even more bizarre atmosphere.

It was a scene that caused the maids and butlers to scream when they saw it. The mood that said they feared the criminal that wrote the notices was beneficial, as well.

At that point, the night ended as the sun began to rise. Shortly before sunrise, there began to be active movement within the Royal Castle and the Nobles District.

These noises included the footsteps of knights busily going to and coming from the Royal Castle and the royal guards that were mainly following them, the low-pitched sound of military officers boldly issuing orders to their subordinates, the small tones of the tableware resounding as maids carried breakfast to their masters, and the working noise of a great number of soldiers and wagons transporting goods.

All of these sounds were related to preparations with regards to the Tomboy Princess' approaching army.

However, the Strong Grandson's preparations appeared to be advancing somewhat on schedule, since they were almost fully completed yesterday.

The orders handed down from the top were accepted without issue, so there was little confusion.

Thanks to their speedy preparations, it can be said that they were almost finished the arrangements for the upcoming battle. Normally, it would have taken a bit more time to finish these preparations.

By the way, with regards to the previously mentioned preparations, the reason a significant number of forces were able to be assembled in a short time is because the Strong Grandson and his allies' forces, which had been left behind in the nobles' territories, had tamed Wyverns and Griffins deliver written instructions to them via airmail.

Once they are ready, the number of soldiers alone will slightly exceed that of the Tomboy Princess' army. Furthermore, the combined armies of the nobles are rounded out by the two Heroes that are supporting them.

The Dark Hero has gone somewhere with the First Queen, and it looks like the Wood Hero is going to carefully observe the state of affairs related to the coup d'etat on this occasion.

Therefore, regarding their fear of being assassinated, almost the entire enemy side was filled with an atmosphere that said that there was no reason that they couldn't win.

During this time, information spread saying that more nobles had been assassinated.

My report reached the Strong Grandson and Sly Old Fox first, who issued a gag order with the hope that it would prevent morale from dropping. However, since the actual truth was circulated anyway, the information had spread quickly.

It looks like they came to the conclusion that it was a bad idea to conceal any further information that came here about nobles being assassinated. However, concerning the advanced notice written in blood, it was suppressed to the point that it was only vaguely circulated. It wasn't entirely hidden, but it was superbly regulated so that a fair number of people didn't know about it, even though they could have found out if they tried to do so.

Although the information didn't remain hidden, troop morale didn't drop much.

It would have caused troop morale to drop either way, but it still seems to be better than all of the members knowing everything from the very beginning. The reason I say this is that people would think that those who didn't gather information were lacking in ability, since they would have learned about the notices if they had done so.

With the gag order issued, my plans were thrown off and I had to change them, since I was in a situation where I was trying to find a suitable time to

circulate the information.

Anyway, since the atmosphere around the Nobles Faction was heavy, which was more or less in accordance with my objectives, that's all I'll say about that.

I wanted to bring the truth up in the rebellion at a fatal moment, but if it creates distrust among them in any way, it should be enough.

As expected of the Strong Grandson and his allies, since they were able to grasp the situation, it seems that they were able to come up with countermeasures somehow or another. However, I'm ready to outwit them every time this happens because of the information gathering abilities of my clones.

It looks like their preparations will be finished today.

The Strong Grandson and his allies are being cautious of us and won't attack the Tomboy Princess' army from the cover of the Royal Capital's walls. Instead, they appear to have decided to crush them head-on at the plains that are exactly midway between her army and the capital.

They aren't using any sort of plan, but instead chose to use pure strength to defeat them.

The Tomboy Princess' forces will almost certainly be defeated if they do this.

Since not only do the Nobles Faction have superior numbers, but also higher quality soldiers because of the existence of the Heroes, the Tomboy Princess' army would not be able to win in a direct confrontation with them.

Even if they make good use of strategy and tactics, I don't know what will happen to the forces that encounter one of the Heroes, which would be the Water Hero and his party in this case.

It may be possible for them to avoid defeat somehow, but it would be better to not expect much.

In the first place, since we should think about recapturing the Royal Castle before anything else, I don't have much interest in what happens to them.

Well, it should be alright, since I took out some insurance on the Tomboy Princess' army.

Even if they are defeated, they shouldn't be completely destroyed.

Crawl (Lulu Iera)】 has been completed. The following hidden conditions were cleared: ≪Castle's Night of Terror≫ and ≪Creeping Malice≫】

Day 172

It seems that the heavens don't favor the Strong Grandson.

More than thirty centimeters of snow had fallen by the time morning came, and the depth is increasing as time passes. On top of that, there was a strong wind mixed in with the falling snow, and thick, black clouds covered the sky. This hid the sun, making the light outside dim even though it was daytime.

It's not possible for them to march in this situation.

Although they'd be able to march if they made use of magic, there would be pointless sacrifices because of things like frostbite, which would cause the rest of the troops to become demoralized.

Since the snowstorm will probably stop in a day or two, the Strong Grandson postponed the march until it passes.

Just like the Strong Grandson, the Duke leading the Tomboy Princess's army wasn't able to march either. It wouldn't be a good thing if they had to set up tents in a snowstorm and sleep outside though, so the nobles that I sent in advance, which are a part of "Grass," let the troops take shelter in the towns within their territories.

I'd say this should help a little, since we want there to be as little wear and

tear on the Tomboy Princess's army as possible when they clash with the Nobles' army.

On a side note, it's been said that in the past it was rare for snow to fall in this season.

I heard that whenever a flying continent where a 【Wise Serpent/Dragon】 lives passes over the skies, the King Tsumoru clouds that support it causes weather like what we're having today. These clouds, which are unique to this world, appear to have a scale that's greater than thunderclouds.

It's difficult to predict these flying continents though, since they don't show up on fixed days.

For that reason, it's just the Strong Grandson and his allies' bad luck that the King Tsumoru clouds showed up today.

There's no way that we'll pass up such a perfect opportunity, though.

Since the sunlight is conveniently blocked by thick clouds and snow, the lowest class of undead, such as Ghosts, shouldn't be naturally purified by the environment.

Because the Tomboy Princess imposed a limitation that damage to the castle should be kept to a minimum, I was in the basement summoning a large amount of 【Ghosts】 and their strengthened version, 【Black Ghosts】.

Ghost-type monsters can't attack with purely physical attacks, but in exchange for that, everything passes through them, and they are invulnerable to physical attacks that don't make use of magic. This makes them the most suitable option to use, since they won't damage the castle.

I summoned approximately 4,000 Ghosts and Black Ghosts and modelled their faces after the dead nobles and private soldiers.

In addition to the ghosts I had summoned, Kanami summoned approximately 2,000 strengthened 【Purple Ghosts】 using 【Intermediate Summoning: Undead】, as well.

Although normal ghosts are semi-transparent, ours were given colors such as black and purple when we summoned them. This seems to be because the Divine Protections we've obtained from our Gods have had an influence on our summoning abilities. By the way, in the case of the Black Ghosts and Purple Ghosts, the black ones are stronger. However, due to the modifiers granted by 【Intermediate Summoning: Undead】, which is an ability one rank higher than mine, there doesn't seem to be a very big difference in terms of their attributes.

From the 6,000 ghosts that were summoned, I left 2,000 of the common ones behind and used 【Soul Eater】 to slurp up 4,000 of the black and purple ghosts like they were noodles.

Ability learned: 【Ghost's Touch】

Ability learned: 【Black Ghost's Touch】

Ability learned: 【Purple Ghost's Touch】

Ability learned: 【Ghost Cry】

As I expected, by eating 4,000 ghosts, it was possible for me to learn something. However, I've determined that I have to eat approximately 1,000 of them to learn one ability in my current state.

This made me wonder whether or not there was any good prey that I could gather that fills both the quality and quantity criteria.

After doing this, I became able to summon the same Purple Ghosts that Kanami-chan had summoned, because I had met the conditions to do so by

consuming them.

Well, that probably doesn't mean much anyway, since I don't think that I will summon the Purple Ghosts in the future. This is because they are inferior to my Black Ghosts.

I sent the remaining 2,000 ghosts that I didn't eat into the Royal Castle.

Want to know what happened after that?

There was pandemonium.

The ghosts passed through the walls behind people and inflicted minor negative status effects like 【Fatigue】 and 【Melancholy】 on them with their contact attack, 【Ghost's Touch】. There was almost no physical damage, but their minds took heavy damage. When soldiers were attacked by this ability, they complained about feeling sick and were taken to the medics.

When the housemaids and ladies in waiting were unlucky and saw the ghosts that had the faces of the nobles and the Minister, as well as hollowed cheeks and sunken eyes, they turned pale in horror before they screamed and fainted.

Because they didn't know where the high-pitched screams of 【Ghost Cry】 were coming from, they continued to be heard inside of the Royal Castle, wearing down the minds of the people that heard them.

Overwhelmed by the large crowd of ghosts that resembled a flash flood, the excessive number of negative status effects pushed people beyond their limits, causing them to begin foaming at the mouth as they passed out one by one.

In these conditions, quite a few things happened.

All Ghosts, including the Black Ghosts, are weak to attacks with magical properties, which makes them simple to kill. Because of this weakness, the only reason it took some time to completely destroy the Ghosts was because there was a large number of them.

Because of this, it took approximately one hour to completely destroy them.

It looked like they were more effective than I expected, so I summoned Ghosts eight times today for the purpose of assaulting the Strong Grandson and his allies in the Royal Castle.

The more I summoned the ghosts to attack them, the quicker the enemy dealt with them, but the outcome was still satisfactory because it didn't give

them any time to relax. Since the laughter of the ghosts could be heard throughout the night, it looks like the enemy's march in a day or two will be fairly harsh.

On my end, I took a break until each group of ghosts had been completely destroyed in order to generate and refill my magic, and then summoned them again. As a result of this, I didn't become too tired.

It was actually quite easy to do.

Today’s synthesis results:

【Ghost's Touch】 ＋ 【Black Ghost's Touch】 ＋ 【Purple Ghost's Touch】 ＝ 【Raise Touch】

Day 173

It seems the weather changed to our disadvantage. It is getting warmer and the dark clouds and heavy snowfall from yesterday dissipated like it was a lie, showing clear blue skies. The sun is shining down on the 70 cm of accumulated snow, blinding anyone staring at the snow.

The Strong Grandson leads the Nobles Faction with his 2,000 soldiers. Their march is aimed towards the approaching Tomboy Princess's army.

The snow was hindering their march. So, an enchanted ward character is used to heat the iron plates. The iron plates are attached to the several boruforu in the front of the army to clear the snow by force. If the boruforu was massive, the snow would be cleared with a single brick similar to a snowplow. I think that the soldiers had a low mana consumption rate because the [Magic] is not generated within the body continuously, but placed as a ward.

As Strong Grandson is traveling in a column in the nobles' lands, they draft soldiers on the way to meet the Tomboy Princess's army. They accumulate approximately 9,000 soldiers. At the current speed of the march of both armies, they will approximately meet in two days time.

Great! The Nobles Faction influence in the Sternbild Kingdom's Royal Capital is trivial.

Half of the influential Nobles Faction including the Sly Old Fox, Hero of the Iron Rock's party, average soldiers and 1,000 private soldiers remained in the castle town. The influential leaders stayed behind because they wanted to buyout the businesses that became stagnant due to the rebellion.

The Hero of the Iron Rock remaining is an annoyance.

The Hero of the Iron Rock is stationed in front of the entrance of the spire that the royal family is locked up in. I set aside my favorite weapon, [Iron hammer of [Isunbaru]], which serves as a battering ram and I watch with caution. He is surrounded by 4 [Companions] and they were killing time by having a pleasant chat.

To describe the 4 [Companions]:

With thin golden hair, silver glasses framing golden pupils and a purple overcoat concealing a club with rusted nails [TL: Similar to Bat with nails weapon], A man of a slender figure clad in light armor, [Torture Official], Toe Tea.

The next individual has two shields with large amounts of nails similar to a porcupine. The man is very large, almost the size of an ogre. His whole body is round, similar to a wine barrel, and he is equipped in armor from head to toe, [Large Cask Clerk], Foolish Pie Rusher.

With indigo blue hair and pupils, features that seems fearless and sincere, a head protector of metallic armor of deep blue green (indigo) but, from the neck down, he is nude, the good young man with the appearance of a knight wearing the dark blue mantle, [Blue Indigo Knight], Christopher Vale Azulite.

With a bow, a mountain sword, and a machete as weapons, wearing a kimono with beast fur with a lot of skin exposed, the weeping barbarian amazoness with a plump chest and dazzling dark skin has a black long hair and grey pupils [Man Sings Woman], Famous Prostitute.

That's the gist of it. With the exception of [Blue Indigo Knight], who is both in outward appearance and inside your typical aristocratic knight, those members are quite strong... I was thinking so.

We invade quietly, and slowly inside, so we are not discovered by Hero of the Iron Rock.

Among the 1,000 private soldiers in the Castle Town, I dispatched 200 of the aristocrat's soldiers beforehand with “Grass”, the enemy numbers around 800. Of those 800, I should be careful of the 100 elite troops.

Excluding the Private soldiers, the general soldiers in charge of the defense of the King’s castle, for the Nobles Faction rebels, are following the Nobles Faction’s order because they were threatened, “if they defy, they will be killed” until yesterday’s events. Since yesterday’s events, they surrendered

because the soldiers were mentally drained from the ghost demoralized the troop. The situation couldn’t be helped but be spread. It was simple.

Although the Sly Old Fox and the like are coming closer to my clone, I easily just neutralize it by controlling them with [Subordinate] from [Parasite]. I was able to manipulate the 800 soldiers freely because they knew nothing.

With this, it can be said the end draws near for the rebellion. It is really disappointing. It is too easy, and I am rather sorry that I cannot praise even the Sly Old Fox’s skill. Though it is a good thing that there is no damage to the castle.

Although the bothersome Rock Hero's Party remains, they are little trouble.

Clones seem to be perceived as it approaches unskillfully. When an existence is stronger than the clone, [Parasite] is harder to use, [Parasite] is a very convenient ability. But, the clone deteriorates considerably compared to main body for Iron Rock Hero and Other parties with the [Heroes] where the probability is lower to get infected, too.

I experimented with the Jadar Wyvern material from the arena to understand it more thoroughly. Even if it enter the body, [Parasite] is defeated by the host if the host is strong concluding that the host has an immunity to the parasite. Although it infected the Sly Old Fox and the like, it seems to be difficult for the Hero of the Iron Rock and his party.

Since the Tomboy Princess is arriving tomorrow, I will leave persuading the Rock Hero for tomorrow. If persuaded, I would like them to swear loyalty. If I cannot persuade them, I will use force. Since I am forbidden to kill the Hero of the Iron Rock by the Tomboy Princess, I do not want to fight him if possible.

But my appetite is stimulated, so unpleasant.

Day 174

Even today, the Hero of the Iron Rock's party is standing in front of the Spire. By the way, the Rock Hero has [Divine Protection of Iron Rock]. He is like a rock and he does not move except to eat and to excrete since yesterday. Though he seems to have a conversation with each comrade, there are no large movements. Sitting cross-legged, the natural image of a Buddha emerges in my mind as the figure puts his arm on his foot.

Because it is convenient if he does not move for this, I control the Sly Old Fox and give instructions to the soldiers, I move each soldier to the specific place, respectively. Because it is suspicious if I fully disarm them, I unequipped them, so they only kept the minimum amount of armament. The sentries and castle guards and each royal family member whom I freed equipped themselves with the remaining equipment left in these specific locations. As soon as I am ready, I will bring the castle under control in no time.

Since I use the clones to prevent noise from escaping, it is quiet outside. All the private soldiers were arrested in the royal castle without wasting a lot of time: it is a success.

Kanami-chan and I went to the place where the tough enemies, including the elites, gathered.

Incidentally, I came upon the nobles of the Nobles Faction. I made them sleep and threw them in prison to determine their punishment later. In less

than 30 minutes since the operation was set in motion, the cleaning was mostly done. The royal castle came back into the hands of the royal family again by the hands of the Tomboy Princess and taken back from the Nobles Faction.

After cleaning up, the Tomboy Princess with her ceremonial sword on her waist and dressed fully approached the spire where Rock Hero's party is located. The reaction of the Hero of the Iron Rock is that of surprise. He wanted to ascertain if the Tomboy Princess is the genuine article or an imitation. Realizing it is the genuine article, he is awestruck.

While the Iron Rock Hero was dubious, I took out my battering ram [Hammer of Isabaru] in my hand while standing up. With that alone, the air creaked heavily with “Gishiri”.

The [Hero of the Iron Rock] and his four companions stood up, and they slowly approached the Tomboy Princess. Iron Rock Hero stared at the Tomboy Princess with an expressionless face. Similar to the [Hero], his companions stared at the Tomboy Princess with no expressions. A strange silence is filling the area, so you could hear the sound of saliva being swallowed.

The major attribute for the Hero of the Iron Rock is the pure physical ability. His body shows muscular strength equal to the Giant race. The body was naturally polished through arduous combat. A [Hero] with Unique, Strong, Matchless, Martial Arts of the Grand Master tier.

By attaching a lump of iron with a pentagonal shape on the tip of the long shaft similar to a Battering ram, [Hammer of Isabaru], destruction is created at maximum acceleration.

The Sternbild Kingdom's Royal Capital was attacked before by a [Wisdom Dragon]. When Species [Gem Dragon] blows, Solid Dragon scales are broken, even Hard Dragon Horn are damaged. Perhaps, it is stronger than Minokichi-kun in terms of pure physical power... probably.

In front of the Hero of the Iron Rock, Tomboy Princess ponders on what to do. For the time being, the Boy Knight waits beside the Tomboy Princess. The Boy Knight cannot even beat [Indigo Blue Knight] who is the weakest of the four companions among the Hero’s party.

The war potential difference is hopeless. If you receive a blow from Rock Hero, a single slab of meat will remain without a hint of your former self. The feelings of awe is not present on the Tomboy Princess’s face as they face each other, using a magnificent standing posture to appear dignified, powerful intentions dwelled in her eyes as she fixed them on the [Hero].

Before long, the Tomboy Princess will be reached if the [Hero] stretches out a hand. Therefore, the Tomboy Princess draws her ceremonial sword from her waist, unlike a normal sword, the tip of the ceremonial sword is round, Tomboy Princess easily handles it at it’s current length. The shining blade does not have a single blemish.

Tomboy Princess drew the sword called [Curtana] with two enchantments: [Mercy] and [Condemn]. This is magic item of [Ancient] rank.

To the Tomboy Princess who drew [Curtana], the [Hero of the Iron Rock] exchange words. The conversation is long. To summarize the conversation content, the [Hero] will receive one attack from Tomboy Princess without resistance.

How are we at this current situation? If I were to explain roughly:

Because he had no intention to revolt against the royal family who he swore loyalty to, he was originally not going to take part in the [Nobles Faction]'s rebellion. However with the Minister being murdered, He was unable to return a favor. To repay a favor of saving his life in the battlefield, he helped the [Nobles Faction]. If the Tomboy Princess remained hiding, he would search for her, and he was more likely to kill her. However. He was impressed by the dignified figure of Tomboy Princess that approached from the front. He was cut by [Curtana]. This was his choice.

What!? This is troublesome. I think, “It is fine since [Hero of the Iron Rock] made his decision, or rather he is serious crap? Or more precisely he is a fool that is honest to a fault? Iron Rock Hero was unique and a really strong individual.”

Back to current events, the Tomboy Princess cut the [Hero] with [Curtana]. It

is a wonderful single blow to sever the neck. It was swung beautifully from left to right to think this was the result of the training given by me. It was certainly fatal, and normally the severed head should roll on the ground. However, one drop of blood does not drop from his body. The head remains firmly on his body.

This is the result from the enchantment, [Mercy] on [Curtana]. [Mercy]: The user's heart takes pity on an individual about to be cut. When pardoned, it does not cut. It does not kill, and the individual will believe that the enchantment is a sign of their salvation. However, the [Hero]'s spirit waned as his neck was cleanly cut. Even with Rock Hero's defense, his body was defenseless with the use of [Conviction], an ability to ignore your natural instincts to defend.

He had acknowledged and accepted that his neck would be cut. I cannot help but think that he does it well. If he was killed by the Tomboy Princess, I might make him a traveling companion just before he completely dies.

However, Tomboy Princess pardoned him. Using the [Curtana] with a purpose to kill, Tomboy Princess displays proof that she had forgiven him from the bottom of her heart for his participation in this rebellion. Not only was Rock Hero forgiven, but also his 4 companions were forgiven with her slashes from [Curtana].

If there was slightest notion to not forgive them, the 5 slashes would kill, and all the heads would be flying off. The real feeling of the Tomboy Princess is

shown when there was no bloodshed at all. Even if I was in Hero of the Iron Rock's party, it would surprise me.

They seem to be astonished as they check that their heads are attached to their necks to self reassure themselves. As soon as they recovered from the shock, the Tomboy Princess uses [Mind Read]. I saw it from far away and I thought it was really dirty to read minds: To know their thoughts. To know their desires. To know their embarrassments. To know it all in detail. It does not fit the Tomboy Princess who possess a certain wickedness. Really, It is too good and amazing.

The mind of the [Hero] is grasped and understood like a doll being played with by the Tomboy Princess. Since only a few people know about the Tomboy Princess’s ability, Iron Rock Hero Party seems to be led around by their noses:

Because she proved that she forgave through [Mercy] on [Curtana] this time, they are able to communicate for the time being. Even if Rock Hero wished, the rebellion was quelled by defeat of the Strong Grandchild. Even, Strong Grandchild who is one of the ringleaders is not executed, but imprisoned.

This is to repay the favor to the Minister, calling it even. Since the reason to participate is lost, they will leave the fight. They said they will watch the development of events now.

The Tomboy Princess who has finished brainwashing Hero of the Iron Rock's party wipes the sweat from her brow with a refreshing, yet wicked smile. She saw me stationed at my remote location, where I was using my silver arm similar to a sniper rifle and crimson spear as a bullet.

The operation is a success. With a smiling face and a thumbs up, the figure does not seem like the Tomboy Princess who brainwashed the 5 individuals a minute ago.

Day 175

Since today is just dealing with the aftermath while in the Royal Capital, I'll quickly talk about what happened to the army.

Today, around noon, the Strong Grandson's forces clashed with the Tomboy Princess' own.

As planned, the war started in the plains and as predicted, the forces of the Strong Grandson were superior. Just as expected, the difference between numbers and the presence of the Hero of Quivering Water was a big factor.

When the battle started, Water Hero rushed forward to the enemy's side with five of his companions, directly towards the Duke who is the head of his household and a leader among Tomboy Princess' forces.

Naturally, a large number of soldiers attempted to stop Water Hero but sadly, they got mowed down by the shock-waves of water created by his attacks. Still, the soldiers who risked their lives and challenged Water Hero were able to slow him down. Meanwhile, the battle between the two forces continued to unfold.

However, ignoring the battle, Water Hero managed to reach the Duke at the other side. By himself, the Duke is capable of at least fighting against two companions of the 【Hero】 but as expected, that was his limit. In the end, his sword got blown away by Water Hero.

Thus, while holding the ≪Pale Sword of Flowing Water, Feinschubel≫ with both hands, the blade threw the Duke’s stance off as it approached his neck. Just before it ended, someone nearby intervened in the nick of time.

The young man, hiding himself by imitating the silver demon’s face with the 【Mad Demon Mask】, wielding the Sunlight’s Soul Sword, Hisperion, and wearing an overcoat over his light armor made of silver steel engraved with the pattern of Parabellum - in other words, Avenger.

Just like Water Hero, Avenger was also chosen as a 【Hero】, and this fact showed when he blocked the strike of Water Hero without moving one step. As for the shock-waves of water created which could damage the body internally, it evaporated from the impossible heat produced by the Sunlight’s Soul Sword, Hisperion.

Avenger then stopped moving and a moment later, Water Hero was hit in his blind spot by a blue flame spear. The high temperature blue flames secretly interacted with oxygen, the spearhead ready to unleash explosions in front.

Water Hero had already placed a defensive layer of water around him and as a result, the attack did not immediately hit his body. However, unable to fully defend against the attack, the blue flame spear drilled through by a few meters before detonating.

The spear that blew up Water Hero was magic casted by Supesei who was waiting for a shot behind Avenger.

Besides the two of them and Water Hero's party, there were other members present as well; Rusty Iron Knight who was wearing a mask just like Avenger, Burasato-san, Gurufu-chan, Scarface, and a squadron of five ogres.

Because I positioned Avenger in the plains just before we separated from him and before the battle started, the Duke was saved. Along with him are a number of goblins and hobgoblins who were included in the planning.

Normally, it is difficult for them to become useful war potential but thanks to the three new equipment each that I provided to all members, their war potential as a group is sufficient enough. Well, it's probably not just due to the equipment.

The members led by Avenger confronted Water Hero's party. Despite the existence of many powerful people such as Avenger whose existence is equal to Water Hero, the latter being nearly as powerful as Burasato-san, less people got killed than expected.

As expected of the 【Hero's】 companions, they continued to fight without suffering much damage. Due to that, the battle kept on going. However, even though Avenger got wounded, he still managed to finish his task in delaying them.

While the Water Hero's party from the opposition aimed at the Duke, Minokichi-kun from our side targeted the Strong Grandson. Unlike Water Hero who charged from the front, Minokichi-kun did so from the side where there are less enemies. Due to their negligence, the Strong Grandson's forces were swiftly cut down.

Minokichi-kun was accompanied by his 9 meter tall pet, Armored Big Bear, along with Asue-chan and an old Thunder Dragonewt riding on a beast. Some members also came with them in order to gain experience, notably a Praying Mantis Type Insectoid and a Dullahan.

While Water Hero was busy with the Tomboy Princess' forces, the Strong Grandson's forces were easily trampled by Minokichi-kun and the others. However, due to the huge difference in scale, the Tomboy Princess' forces suffered less damage.

In the end, the Strong Grandson was forced to retreat from the plains. The Duke, whom Water Hero targeted, seemed to be leading the Tomboy Princess' forces but truthfully, he is just a strong representative. Unless the Tomboy Princess herself is killed, even total annihilation of her forces wouldn't be considered a victory.

Also, the Strong Grandson is just the current head of the Nobles Faction. Even if the Duke or the Strong Grandson is killed, it would be meaningless in the end.

A lot of time though would be wasted in trying to decide the next representative. It could weaken the unity between the forces wishing to remove the Tomboy Princess. To avoid this, the Strong Grandson chose to withdraw. They were forced to due to Minokichi-kun who was rampaging in their ranks.

As the result of their long pursuit, it became known that the enemy withdrew from the plains to the city named Sengrey which had a close connection with the Strong Grandson, all in order to reorganize their forces.

Since it’s possible to get to Sengrey from the Royal Capital in just a few hours, the Tomboy Princess took command and planned to besiege the city. With that, I finished my preparations and quickly fell asleep.

【Character of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] 【Companion of the Important Existence (Subcast)】 Supesei, has ranked up】

【“1st” Condition 【Rank Up】 has been cleared, Title 【Calamity Star Priestess】 granted】

【Character of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] 【Companion of the Important Existence (Subcast)】 Burasato, has ranked

up】

【“1st” Condition 【Rank Up】 has been cleared, Title 【Dried Rust Frightening Blade】 granted】

【Hidden condition of Section 7 【Sphere of War (Evil Ballad)】 of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] Fourth Chapter 【Kingdom’s Advancing Revolution】, ≪Milestone≫ ≪False Firearm≫ has been cleared】

【Hidden condition of Section 8 【Horse of Retreat (Tottle Tyrol)】 of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] Fourth Chapter 【Kingdom’s Advancing Revolution】, ≪Fear Value Breakthrough≫ ≪Fighting Spirit Value Breakthrough≫ has been cleared】

【Hidden condition of Section 9 【Hoof of Axe Extinction (Aste Rios)】 of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] Fourth Chapter 【Kingdom’s Advancing Revolution】, ≪Axe Emperor’s Frenzy≫ ≪Unopposed Hierarchy of Battle≫ has been cleared】

【Hidden condition of Section 10 【Matter of Desperate Fight (Quatre Gator)】 of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] Fourth Chapter 【Kingdom’s Advancing Revolution】, ≪No victory on both sides ≫ ≪Lack of Assistance≫ has been cleared】

Just as I went to bed, lines of information showed up before I fell asleep.

Day 176

Due to yesterday's war, a lot of members had ranked up; a Half Ice Lord, a Half Smith Lord, a Yafuru, and a Gill-Ogre appeared.

This time, there are many new species. Since there's too many members to talk about, I'll only talk about those who obtained 【Divine Protection】.

First is the 【Half Spell Lord】, Supesei, who had ranked up into a 【Spell Lord Variant】.

She had received 【Divine Protection】 from the 【God of Magic】 and the 【Demigod of the Staff】, strengthening her magic power and casting speed. Her abilities and the magic power within her body are quite extraordinary and something to be proud of.

As a Lord, her physical abilities had also improved. She is now capable of participating in more active maneuvers and is now more like a mobile artillery than a fixed one.

By the way, her physical appearance didn't change much.

Next is the 【Half Blood Lord】, Burasato-san, who ranked up into a 【Blood Lord Variant】.

She had received 【Divine Protection】 from the 【God of Blood】 and the 【Demigod of the Sword】. Her abilities unique to the Blood Lord species, her combat abilities, and her sword wielding skill have greatly improved.

Thanks to the 【God of Blood’s Divine Protection】, a great change in her attitude can be seen when she’s in battle though for me, she just seems more reliable than before.

Just like Supesei, her appearance didn’t change much. However, all of her muscles are more developed and her height increased by about 10 centimeters. Overall, her body’s physical capabilities as a Lord are far greater compared to when she was a Half Lord.

After that is Redhead who, despite not participating in the battle, managed to gain the 【Demigod of War Beast’s Divine Protection】.

Recently eating monsters from the wild with a raw taste probably caused this to happen. I do think it matches Redhead whose personality resembles a wolf or a dog.

Since her movement and agility got enhanced, she might be able to defeat Rusty Iron Knight.

It felt somewhat pitiful to think of Rusty Iron Knight that way considering who the teacher is supposed to be. No, since he has a lot of battle experience,

he should be alright. Probably.

In addition, the other blessings obtained are:

- Seiji-kun’s 【Demigod of Affection’s Divine Protection】
- Dodome-chan’s 【Demigod of Observation’s Divine Protection】
- Gurufu-chan’s 【God of Corrosion’s Divine Protection】
- The five Ogre squadron’s 【Demigod of Color’s Divine Protection】 which grants one color for each of them; 【Red】, 【Blue】, 【Yellow】, 【Green】, and 【Ash】. By wearing equipment which corresponds to their respective color, they will receive a large power boost.

Truthfully, Gurufu-chan’s 【God’s Divine Protection】 would most likely make her untouchable. Compared to everything, I am quite pleased with it. That’s something that shouldn’t be said out loud though.

For now, there are other matters to deal with. Though as expected of a large-scale battle, it was quite satisfactory since experience was obtained efficiently.

So today, with the Tomboy Princess who is dressed in an attire exclusively used for war on my shoulder, we boarded my skeleton centipedes and headed to the castle where the Strong Grandson is staying in, guarded by 800 troops.

Because the inconspicuous King had already been released from the spire, he is currently handling the cleanup in the Royal Capital. Due to that, it is possible to fight the Strong Grandson without any problems.

The march from the Royal Capital began early in the morning, arriving safely at the place the city where the Strong Grandson is holed in, Sengrey, around noon. Although the Tomboy Princess' forces have already surrounded and repeatedly attacked the city, they couldn't get close due to the enemy's 【Magic】 and arrows. As a result, they were unable to get any effective results.

Assuming that the castle walls of this world are reinforced against 【Magic】 from enemies, weak magic won't be able to break through it. There are also defensive mechanisms incorporated such as rocks, boiling water, and spikes of iron plates which are dropped on enemies who get to close.

Usually, even the defending side would need additional troops in order to counter those besieging the castle. However, since the Tomboy Princess' forces didn't have much numbers to begin with, breaking through the front is already impossible.

Still, the Tomboy Princess' arrival on the battlefield is as scheduled. After quickly greeting the Duke, I decided to swiftly end the siege by using some new useful equipment.

When I said new equipment, I was referring to the 82mm caliber mortars.

Mithril, steel, and black bone materials were used for it. The main mechanism uses my clone which is located at the bottom of the barrel to shoot compressed air into the shell which generates a small peculiar firing noise.

Each mortar shell is made of 10 restructured Burst Seeds. Naturally, its explosive power is greater and it's possible to destroy a large area with just a single shell.

There are 20 completed mortars available. Only 10 were brought along today but they'll all be fired at the same time.

For the first time, the enemy soldiers using arrows and magic on the castle walls were blown off in an instant by attacks from the sky. Unlike magic, the shells are small and quiet so it is nearly impossible to detect and intercept them.

The soldiers on the wall are torn to pieces as the bombardment continues, not stopping until the castle wall is destroyed.

I then send out the Revolution Corps led by Minokichi-kun towards the castle gates which are now unmanned.

With a single blow from his axe, the castle gates were crushed and turned into wooden splinters, allowing us to enter the city.

Of course, our companions didn’t remain silent either. Using the Tomboy Princess’ 【Mind Reading】 to gather a lot of information while she is on my shoulder, we were able to understand that we had to get through enemies that are being forced to sacrifice themselves in order to get to the Strong Grandson. With my clones that had been turned into 【Communication Mediums】, all the corps were able to respond in real time.

Using pincer attacks, surprise attacks, traps, and dividing them into smaller groups, the enemy got cornered and could not escape other than trying to forcefully break through or surrendering. They got desperate and continued to fight, dying as a result.

We advanced while clearing the way, finally arriving at the robust mansion where the leaders of the Nobles Faction and the Strong Grandson were holed in. Naturally, we encountered Water Hero who is overflowing with fighting spirit. With his five companions at his side, he is staring at me, no, at the Tomboy Princess who is sitting on my shoulder.

With each holding a weapon in hand, the area is brimming with the intention to fight. I lowered the Tomboy Princess and entrust her to the Boy Knight. Along with Kanami-chan, I took one step forward.

Taking notice, the Water Hero unsheathed his beloved sword clad in water. Not only does it have amazing speed, the characteristics of the streams of water created had a rather peculiar movement style.

【Yatendouji 【Heresy Nemesis】 has been activated】

【From this, Yatendouji has performed “Hostile Action／Those Who Have Awakened the Psalms” against the 【Heretic／Those Who Have Awakened the Psalms】 of the 【Eschatology Conquest War】 - the start of the battle has been declared】

【Until the fight is settled, Yatendouji abilities will be increased by 【300%】 】

【Due to the 【Two God Class’】 Joint Battle compensation, Hekaterina’s abilities will be increased by 【210%】 】

【Special Skill 【Heresy Nemesis】 will last until the conclusion of the battle】

Just like that time against Avenger, an announcement flowed into my mind. The Water Hero probably received a similar message. While he was

surprised for a moment, his face changed into a fierce smile as he bared his fangs and instantly attacked.

I smiled back at the Water Hero as I roared and raised my vermillion spear in one hand. After the fight started, almost ten minutes had passed.

Most of the surroundings buildings had collapsed from the aftermath of the battle while numerous cracks spider-webbed across the ground.

While we were injured, I and Kanami-chan are still up while the Water Hero and his party were now bleeding while down on the ground. The Water Hero’s five companions were already unconscious yet the Water Hero's still looking at us with hatred in his eyes despite having fallen down. It was quite annoying so I took his consciousness away by hitting him with the butt end of my vermillion spear.

At the same time, another announcement flowed into my mind.

【Conclusion has been reached】

【Special Ability 【Heresy Nemesis】 has been removed】

【Because Yatendouji won against the 【Heretic／Those Who Have Awakened the Psalms】 of the 【Eschatology Conquest War】, a reward

will be granted】

【Yatendouji has obtained 【Quivering Water’s Soul Sword, Neiletis】!!】

【According to the Lunar Eclipse God, the defeat of the 【Heretic’s／Those Who Have Awakened the Psalms’】 【Those who struggle together ／Companions of the Important Existence (Subcast)】 by Yatendouji has been confirmed】

【As a bonus reward, 【Random Treasure Chests ［Superior］ 】 will be awarded】

And again, just like after the fight against Avenger, I obtained some new trophies. Along with two 20 centimeter long and tall gold and silver treasure boxes, I had also received a sword similar to the Sunlight’s Soul Sword, Hisperion that I lent to Avenger.

At first glance, the blue sword looked like it was made of water yet it managed to maintain its shape and best of all, it is quite hard. I could say that it’s made of metal that had the characteristics of water.

In the meantime, I try to eat it. That turned out to be fruitless as I couldn’t even chip it. Somehow, I felt like I could eat it but that was apparently my imagination. Really, looks like the questions on why I couldn’t eat it would

never run out. I wonder when I'll be able to eat items of this level.

Not discouraged, I try to read the information of the 【Quivering Water’s Soul Sword Neiletis】.

Name: 【Quivering Water’s Soul Sword Neiletis】

Category: 【■■／Sword】

Class: 【■■■■】

Abilities: 【Neiletis】

【Heresy Nemesis】

【Quivering Water’s Explosion】

【Water Spirit Origin】

【Quivering Water Penetration】

【Ability Boost】

【Locked】

【Locked】

【Locked】

【Locked】

Description: ■ sword of ■■■■ class obtained by Yatendouji after achieving victory against the 【Heretic／Those Who Have Awakened the Psalms／Main Cast】 of the 【Eschatology Conquest War】.

The gods existing in the world can take on three forms, ≪■■／■■／■■≫, where the sword is one of the ■■. The blade has been tempered with clear water and is always transparent, constantly quivering.

Only Yatendouji has the capability to touch this sword. Any person who touches this sword without permission would have an unimaginable disaster befall them.

Since it is ■■, all exceptions other than destruction are absolutely impossible.

Do you wish to view additional information?

≪YES≫ ≪NO≫

Despite the different details, the description is similar to Hisperion. It’s just as useful though despite the different abilities.

Since I prefer weapons with longer reach like the vermilion spear over swords, it will remain in my item box until needed. Giving an item of that level to someone unskilled would be a big waste. As for the treasure chests, I decided to confirm the contents later.

Since the Water Hero is a part of the Book of Psalms like Avenger, I didn’t kill him and just left him as is as I quickly head towards the mansion.

Right now, the Strong Grandson is cornered in the depths of the mansion. Excluding the 【Hero】, he is probably still hiding other trump cards and is making a last stand.

Well, other than expecting that a Chimera formed from a Jadar Wyvern would be a hard fight, let’s put that aside. The Chimera had a shape just like a Dragon Meatball.

Sown together in its huge round body are hardened dragon meat and several layers of dragon scales that are overlapping each other. It is

capable of breathing a combination of 8 different [Dragon Venoms] used for torture and has 14 wings, long claws, and fangs made with magic metal, the sharpness and hardness incomparable to poorly made swords.

While it might have a grotesque appearance, I still felt thankful to the Strong Grandson since he took the trouble in preparing such a delicious surprise. After roasting its entire body, I ate it along with everyone else. Taking the opportunity, I also ate the strong ones that I killed after putting the idea off till the last minute.

Ability learned: 【Confusion of the Dead】

Ability learned: 【Wailing Wyvern’s Body】

Ability learned: 【Demigod of Dancing’s Divine Protection】

Ability learned: 【Demigod of Shaping’s Divine Protection】

With this, the job is mostly finished.

The mastermind, the Strong Grandson, had been caught. Most of the people who participated in the coup d’état had also been arrested. How they

would be treated from now on is up to the Tomboy Princess, something I have nothing to do with and had no interest in. Well, whatever happens, the princess would probably fix things up.

By the time everything is over, it's already dark. It's quite troublesome to go back to the Royal Capital right now so we decided to spend the night at ≪ Sengrey≫.

Because not all the members that I recently mobilized and the members that were already present before could return to the Royal Capital right now, it's quite fine.

I was a bit tired so upon plopping myself on bed after various things, sleepiness quickly hit me.

【All hidden conditions of Section 11 【Lord of Perishing Wails (Superior Apostle)】 of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] Fourth Chapter 【Kingdom’s Advancing Revolution】, ≪Courageous Enemy’s Defeat≫ ≪No Unreasonable Kills≫ ≪Excessive Gluttony≫ has been cleared】

Looks like the hidden conditions were cleared smoothly. However, just as I went to sleep, I ask in my mind if they really are hidden conditions.

Day 177

Early in the morning, a strange chill awakened my consciousness. While still sleeping, I use 【Early Warning Search Network Phased Radar Array】. The response shows the First Queen and the Dark Hero, who both should be missing, in the room next to me, which nobody uses. I continue to examine the presence in detail, and as I investigate what they are doing in the room next door, they seem to be spying in to my room by using the power of the Dark Hero. At the end of their gaze is me, lying on the bed. Without turning to Redhead and Kanami-chan, who are lying next to me, I sense them staring at me as well. I felt an additional chill.

The First Queen is breathing heavily in an excited state, which is something bewitching. The Hero of Darkness is has a similar atmosphere as the First Queen even though there is little movement, as usual.

They seem to be scolding each other through whispering. Even I cannot hear it as the Hero of Darkness is concealing it with her ability and because they are in the next room which is separated (from this one) by a wall. However it might not be a good thing, at least for me. I'm getting more convinced of this, as the chill increases.

For the time being, I raise my body and act as I'm getting up. While doing that, the excitement level of the two people next door only increases. The chill increases as well. Because my body was slightly trembling, I put on my favorite poncho made by Parabellum. Then, the presence changes and seems to be awfully disappointed. Today, for the time being, I decided not to

take a morning bath. Even though I have a damp body from last night's sweat and it is a little unpleasant, I guess it should not affect my body’s hygiene.

Today, after experiencing such a situation, we return to the Royal Capital. However, aside from the ones who are scheduled to work at the Royal Capital there in the future, the other members are supposed to return to our base. Also, if all the members would go to the royal capital at the same time, it would be a bit troublesome because there are people who have not seen the world outside of the Kuuderun Great Forest yet and because I thought that it was just right to broaden their view.

That being said, as it’s not unusual that we’ll be tailed and it’s not amusing if our base is known, I made a distribution of 10 groups with Minokichi-kun and Burasato-san and the rest as leaders in order to return by various routes. I guess the total number of people of one group is no more than a few dozen, but it should be just right to practice marching in group. Transporting all members of the group should not be particularly difficult either as the skeleton centipedes already have the carriage ability.

By the way, the routes are divided based on military results. The person who got better results gets a route with more privileges, such as hot springs and tourist attractions. For a person who was less active and has worse results, there is the condition to take a more dangerous and severe route in order to raise his own strength. In case they cannot bear it, there’s no problem as only that person suffers a loss.

After we returned to the Royal Capital, I received a reward from the Tomboy Princess. Though there is a big reward from training the guards as well, the sum rewarded for participating in the war is a different figure. Because I was an important factor in repelling the coup d'état by being a pawn of the Tomboy Princess, it will be an appropriate amount of money. However, thinking about things in the future it has been decided that I will not only receive gold coins and gold plates, but also a plot of land near Osvel or a small privilege as an exception.

Since I got it as one of my rewards, I decided to relax in the mansion of a certain aristocrat that was awaiting execution for participating in the coup d'état. The mansion is located where the [Castle District] and the [Noble District] meet, which is a convenient location as I easily can move in various directions. Because the noble who lived here was rich, the grounds are spacious. The reason I took it was because a small part of the mansion was used as a store, which was what my intention is as well. Since for the time being, only a housemaid and a butler who were employed by the aristocrat were there. I hired the people who wanted to stay working here and I was referred to a person who previously worked for to the Tomboy Princess.

Because I intend to use this estate as a base for business in the future, I'm thinking to rebuild it in various ways. But let's decide on how to do the reconstruction later.

For today, I only focus on sorting between the things that need to be done

and the things that are unnecessary. Once that was done, I spent the rest of the day discovering hidden wealth with my children.

Day 178

In today's day and age, in the back streets and the underground of the Royal Capital, there are starving children who have trouble finding a daily meal. As both men and woman considered orphans unhealthy, they were suitable for abduction. As was the norm by some countries and regions in my previous life, the orphans were either abandoned by their parents because of poverty, thrown away because a physical deformity, or they lost their parents in the war. There are countless reasons why the various orphans did not have guardians at the moment.

At one point, the Sternbild Kingdom's Sage from Another World created orphanages with his own money as a way to help them. However, there are only a few orphanages because of competing interests of the nobles and the issue of cost. Even though a vital amount of orphans were able to live there, there are a number of children who were left out. Still, the fact is that the results were more than adequate as they were raised beyond a certain amount. Even with knowledge of a different world and an abundance of magical power inside his body, the [Sage from Another World] had a personal limit.

Though many of the orphans that were left out died to starvation or cold, some of them were persistently hanging on to their life. It is not unusual for the surviving orphans to group up and resort to stealing in order to eat. It is a really common thing. After living one or two months in the neighborhood, I hardly look up from theft anymore. When the stealing orphans are caught by adults, they will be hit and kicked and left in a terrible state in on the back alley. If the orphan is unlucky, it will die. As there are orphans who earn

pocket change by being a traveler's guides or by polishing the shoes of a traveler or something like that, the ones who commit crimes like theft are ignored by the people. That aside, since the citizens are also suffering in their life, it is hard to judge it as completely bad.

Even so, if such an orphan disappears unnoticed, the citizens will not mind it very much. They'll likely think: "Did the weasel die or was he kidnapped by anyone? Either way, it's good he disappeared." Therefore, I'm choosing just the right targets. Because I got permission from the kind through the Tomboy Princess directly as one of the rewards of the war this time, I gather them in my mansion without any discussion.

Like that, by noon 50 children were abducted and lined up in front of me. Most orphans are weaker than average children of the same age, are dirty all over and emit a smell that is difficult to describe. Some are weakened by disease as well. However, their eyes expressed a strong will to live. While I stand in from of them, most of the orphans naturally turn their eyes to the ground, though there is one that has the guts to stare back at me. Because he's the oldest amongst them, I assume he's the ringleader for now.

The ringleader who is trying to protect the younger orphans is bombarding me with various questions, but for the time being I began with treating everyone to food.

Amongst the magic items I obtained in the Labyrinth City Purgatory, there are some pans that start to cook automatically when I put ingredients in.

Because it was necessary to prepare several meals this time, I effectively used them and put together a dish for 50.

I put the meat of Horned Rabbit and Turtle Snake in a large pan, add in plenty of vegetables which I bought at the Royal Capital's marketplace, throw in milk and cheese and complete something like a cream stew. A rich, fragrant smell stimulates the appetite. While tasting it, I'm surprised the dish is so delicious because it was prepared in such a noncommittal way.

When the cream stew is ready, I pour it into something like a large platter. I distributed spoons amongst the orphans for a reason, but it is not used and they single-mindedly eat it by greedily taking it with their hands and putting it in their mouth. As they swallow everything down to the last drop, they're eyes become bloodshot from the frightening sight (of an empty platter). They seemed to be more starved than I expected.

Because I made a new batch, it did not become a problem, though the orphans looked curiously at me after having finished eating the meal. They leaned their head to one side as if they wanted to say: "Why did you give us such a delicious thing?"

I don't answer it and subsequently put all the members in the bath. As expected for a mansion that is built by a person who was rich amongst the nobles, the bathroom is big enough to house dozens of people all at once. Even though the number of maids who still remain has decreased, I order them to wash the orphans' bodies. While they use soap created from raw

materials that can be gathered in the Kuderun Large Forest in order to scrape the dirt off the orphans, it was accumulating in the bathroom. Even though the bathroom was considerably dirty, consider it a good thing as the orphans became clean and smelled normal again. Only the bathroom needs to be cleaned again.

Now that that's done, I cure the children suffering from diseases. Regardless whether their wounds have festered, they're on the verge of having tetanus, they have parasitic worms, or one arm and leg became hard to move because of a severe burn, it's easy to cure if I combine a healing skill with [Blood Elixir]. Though it's still not yet possible to completely cure an orphan who lost his eyeball and finger, I can at least soften the pain in order so that he can endure it.

After the meal, the bath, and the treatment ended, I line the orphans up before me again and they seemed to have changed their state of mind. The wariness of the orphans has faded considerably and they gaze friendly at me. Even though the boys and girls who have lived from some time in their severe world do not loosen their wariness, they are still at a loss as to why I'm taking such good care of them while not explaining my motives.

Seeing that, and because all the preparations were finished, I explain to the orphans why I abducted them.

There's no way I would let the orphans eat a meal, bathe them and cure them for a charitable cause. I tell them my goal plain and simple: I want to

raise them as a war potential for the future. With a vigorous fertility like goblins, and dependent on how they are used in addition with the others, their existence will become an important war potential. While humans can acquire [Jobs], they are only able to become inhumanly strong up to a certain extent.

However, as humans having few other possibilities, people that achieve an interesting growth will appear. Humans are excellent in terms of diversity.

When taking these things into consideration, it becomes necessary to have human group members that I have trained from an early age. However, the normal human has a slow growth. If you want to raise them from the time when they are a baby, it'll take a lot of years. Though humans are born amongst the members of my group, but it's too slow. Because of that reason, I concluded that a quicker way is to abduct children who have already reached a certain age.

For both sides, this is not a bad situation. I pick up orphans who do not become a problem in particular when they disappeared, to let them live alone in order to train them while giving them a minimum of food in order not to die.

You might say it's for that reason that I picked up 50 orphans that would have died in the near future, and decided that they would join as new members of the group today. I'm thinking of leaving the ringleader at the top position and decide to treat it as a military unit experiment on how to raise

them as a new weapon with the aim of becoming of practical use to me.

The new experimental youth corps Solitude is formed.

Day 178: Side Story

Kid Boss's

Just living was a struggle. Ever since I ran away from that bastard father just like mom, I did whatever I can to stay alive. Thievery, blackmail, anything but murder.

Even in the beautiful Royal Capital, there's things that cannot be brought to light. Orphans who live like me are numerous, that's why we gathered ourselves for survival. Our gathering was ruled by me who was blessed in physique, and even without blood connections, we formed a family tied by a solid bond.

Orphans have their own struggles for power as well, we who know nothing but to fight. Kicking someone off, claiming that day's food. Because of us swarming over the food, there's also those who end up dying of starvation. Even so, we wanted to live. That's why we never hesitated to rob.

But, us who know no other way to live, the adults directed looks at us like that of dirty rats, despised, cursed and beaten are common events. Many died from those beatings.

This world is truly strict, even just surviving poses difficulties for us.

That's why today, when we were abducted, somewhere in my heart I already gave up. I thought I'd be sold off as a slave. In the past, there were

friends who disappeared like that. That’s why I thought, this time was my turn. But, I cannot show weakness. Behind my back I have family. My younger brothers and sisters.

The kidnapper who obviously fears no enemy - I stared at the black oni. I shivered inside. He was clearly too dangerous, I felt like fainting.

Even so I will put on a strong front. I will stand my obstinacy. Without diverting my eyes I continued staring.

Looking on, I questioned multiple times but was never answered.

With no explanation, marrow, and rice were served for us. Throwing many ingredients into a large pot, what was made was a hot stew. Steaming hot from being freshly cooked, it looked very tempting. Gurgle, my throat sounded.

Was it poisoned, didn’t cross my mind. Overwhelmed from the smell, we lost ourselves in the dream and moved our hands. The stew was, very delicious. More delicious than anything we ever had, to the point we were on the verge of tears, it was that delicious. There was more than enough for all of use without having to steal someone else's, we were told to eat to our full, my mind ran in circles, I ate the stew while thinking.

After we finished eating, we were put in a bath. The warm water felt better

than we imagined. It felt itchy when dirt fell from our bodies with the soap, but we adapted soon, it felt wonderful. It's been a long time really, since I was able to relax like this. The body that had felt so heavy, became light as a feather.

Next, we were told that they'll treat our injured. When the ones I thought were too late were healed one by one, I was reasonably surprised.

Then, we were lined up once again in front of the oni. There, we were informed the reasons we were gathered this time.

In short, in exchange for food, clothing, and shelter, we were to offer our labor. On top of that we would receive the education needed to survive alone, the deal was too sweet for me. Of course we all went with it.

With no reason to argue, when we were offered food and safe living, we took the hand offered to us.

- The Kid Boss was born.
- The Youth Experimentation Unit Solitude was formed.
- Investment towards the future = priceless.

Day 179

Since the morning, I've been training the former orphans of Solitude. Even though I cannot do an all-out training yet as their bodies are still too weak, the doping enchantment is amazing.

Around noon the Tomboy Princess came to the mansion. Apart from the Boy Knight who is always at the side of the Tomboy Princess, the First Queen and the Dark Hero also came along for some reason. I wonder why. The First Queen and the Dark Hero stayed two to three steps behind the Tomboy Princess, once more gazing at me with a sentiment that is difficult to express. While having the hunch that I mustn't touch on the awkward subject, I offered the Tomboy Princess some of the tea that I got from the elves. I took a breather to be more relaxed and exchanged some small talk during the tea, after which I asked about the reason of their visit.

The reason was simple, as they explained they want me to work as the Tomboy Princess' private soldier continuously.

The terms of the contract entailed a standard pay of 2 gold plates per month = 2 million gold (about 20 million yen). So as its 24 gold plates per year, it becomes 240 million yen. If there is some kind of other work, a suitable amount of additional gold is paid. Accepted expenses such as buying medicine and weapons needed in order to accomplish the mission, the Tomboy Princess will bear the entire sum. Though while it is limited to within the Sternbild Kingdom, a number of different privileges are attached, such as being able to borrow weapons. Naturally it is satisfactory considering the

danger attached to the job. Nevertheless, even though the yearly income exceeds that of a lower to middle-class noble, it is not favorable enough for me anymore.

For all that, I decline it. Looking at the dumbfounded faces of the Tomboy Princess and other two from the Sternbild Kingdom's side, Redhead, also sitting at the table, bursted into laughter. Kanami-chan only smiled friendly, but was probably enjoying everyone's reaction. Even though it was sadistic, it cannot be helped.

Under the current circumstances, I decline the contract. In order to discover this world some more, being in the position of a mercenary who can move freely is convenient. As there might not only be 【Men of Valour】 and Heroes, but also special Psalms such as 【Demon King】 and【Demon Emperor】, which let me fight against countries with existences such as 【Beast King】 and 【Beast Emperor】, this contract will most likely become a hindrance. Being a private soldier to the Royal Family, in addition of the Tomboy Princess who is likely to become the next Queen, will bring too many mental situations. Physical challenges are welcome, I do not even dare to imagine the irritating nature attached to it. And so on.

Even though I explained it like that, I made a certain contract with the Tomboy Princess because she persuaded me too desperately. The terms of the contract is one gold plate per month = 1 million gold (I'll be paid around 10 million yen), compensation in order to give a small preferential treatment, which is 『Do not accept a request which is hostile to the Tomboy Princess』.

In short it can be said that 『I only stop an enemy that shows a frightening hostility, because compensation is paid』. I think it might be good like this. With this, the discussion with the Tomboy Princess has ended. After that, I agreed with the First Queen and the Dark Hero in different way. I yielded to an overwhelming sense of intimidation and hot atmosphere, but I will not go in to detail.

When the evening fell, four people went back home and by that time, I was exhausted. Note to self. Zealous believers are scary. In order to heal my tired spirit, I went to sleep in a soft warm bed at night. I was surprised that right before that I was still able to see what was being displayed.

【Hidden condition of the final section 【Princess’ Command・Rubiria Mausuku】 Of the World Psalms [Legend of the Black Eclipse Demon] Chapter 4 【Kingdom's Advancing Revolution】, «Rejection of Bondage» has been cleared】

【Hidden Condition «Contract Exchange» was unfortunately not cleared.】

【Success Reward 【Great Treasure Chest［Superior］】 will be awarded.】

【Success Reward 【Demon Class Limited・Potency Rise Drugs】 will be

awarded.】

【Success Reward 【Demon Liquor・Signature [Final Drop of the Cherry Trees in the Evening]】 will be awarded.】

【Success Reward 【Demon Liquor・Signature [Demon Drunken Slaughter ・Inexhaustible]】 will be awarded.】

【Success Reward 【Indicating Ancient Lithograph】will be awarded.】

【Success Reward 【■■■■】 will not be awarded, as conditions are not cleared yet.】

What…That. The final condition, I think that it might be a failure. I guess it can’t be helped so I’ll give up and go to sleep. Even though I’m very worried about the last one, it’s alright as there is liquor.

Day 180

Today I left the training of the Solitude corps to 3 people: Redhead, Auro, and Argento.

I decided to produce a new type of ear cuff. Incidentally, Kanami-chan is sitting next to me while enjoying some tea and reading the novel I got from the Tomboy Princess.

During production, the first ear cuffs were enchanted with three abilities: [Continuous Regeneration], [Lesser Increase Physical Strength] and [Lesser Increase Agility]. Because the previous batch was aimed at improving the body's performance, the new ear cuffs are enchanted with [Increase Concealment Rate], [Lesser Mind Protection] and [Lesser Attribute Protection]. This way it is likely to oppose a mental attack to some degree.

By the way, new enchantments will not be added to the first generation ear cuffs as the success rate is low and therefore it is more bothersome. To be honest, it is enough like this. Seeing as the performance is guaranteed, I will decorate it for each person if they do not like the appearance. I was able to create enough for every member by evening. Because my level of enchanting is higher than before, the speed was increased. Many of my abilities from the [Job]'s system are now satisfactory as they've become high in level.

At night a report arrived from Blacksmith-san, who remained at the base, that Gobujii had died. The cause of death was not an illness or an external

factor, but old age. There certainly were signs. To begin with, he had nearly reached the limit of the lifespan of a goblin.

Recently, his body movements in particular worsened and the time he slept increased day after day. Since he used to do a lot of things energetically before and that slowly disappeared, I already thought it would be soon. Therefore, it wasn't a big surprise.

However, Gobujii dying in this way... I wonder if he died doing something erotic.

You took care of me. You taught me various things about this world. I thank you. Nevertheless you were a perverted grandpa. Probably it was you that conceived the child that I was born into. Revealing a wry smile, I pray for his soul to rest in peace, "Be safe Gobujii".

In today's night sky, a star sparkles brightly.

Day 181

Before morning, I was already flying for hours with the 【Jade Eagle King’s Wings】 equipped. Kanami-chan wasn’t accompanying me despite being the only Lord among the members who could fly.

Since it started getting cold, I thought high-speed flight wouldn’t be a good idea. However, the [Cold Resistance] of the exoskeleton is better than I thought, and it didn’t feel cold when I was flying through thick cold clouds.

As expected though, the surface of the exoskeleton got covered in thin ice but it’s not a problem as the ice easily comes off from a little shake.

I continued flying at full speed without any worry.

I encountered several flying monsters while on the way but since they easily got blown away by the violent winds produced when I passed through them, they probably weren’t high-level monsters.

As I'm in a hurry, I decided to pick up and eat them later when I head back. I think I'll enjoy checking what kind of flavor they have.

And with that, I arrive at the base located at the Kuderun Large Forest.

Naturally, the reason I returned is to bid farewell to Gobujii who died

yesterday.

Only several hours had passed since his death. I went to sleep early yesterday so that I could wake up before I usually do and return to the base.

Since I was quite fast, I arrived at the base by sun rise, the time when most of the members who were left at the base become fully active.

The base has low combat ability since the only members left are non-combatants; the [Cat Siths] and Kobolds that worked at the Hot Spring, the Dwarves, and the human women.

Because I didn’t tell them in advance, they were surprised when I suddenly showed up but quickly understood it as 『Since it is Aporou, it’s not strange for me to be present in the base and the Royal Capital at the same time.』

Although many members came from the outside before they started living here, it seems to be that their “Common Sense” had slowly collapsed. Having become familiar with the “Common Sense” here, their reactions got diluted.

I expected that they would at least care about the other species that they have become familiar with. However, their initial response was quite lonesome when I think about it.

Anyway, I exchange simple greetings with the members I pass through as I hurry to Gobujii's location.

It seems like Gobujii's corpse had been enshrined in the morgue to prevent his body from rotting. Well, it would be quite inconvenient if the residential area had to be remodeled into a morgue so to prevent that, one of the deep tunnels had been left out in advance.

It was quite cold and most of the insects had been exterminated so keeping corpses there for a short time won't be a problem.

Although it's possible to use the place for food storage due to its size, that will be for later.

Upon arriving at my destination, Gobujii is lying on top of the flat stone covered with fur.

He is wearing his usual loincloth with his favorite walking stick by his side.

There are no visible injuries so it looks like he is sleeping peacefully but upon closer look, it's obvious that he's already dead. His body is cold and has a putrid smell, indicating that he will never move again.

It's unlikely that he would turn into an undead and start moving though.

Well, even if he did turn into one, he'd probably be still weak.

After confirming it completely, I clasp my hands and silently pray.

Namu. I pray that Gobujii's soul may rest in peace.

I feel a little lonely as I thought of various things while looking at his body.

There were no tears of sadness, but just like to the long-dead Velvet, my gratitude for Gobujii will never disappear.

If it weren't for the old man, it would certainly be hard to obtain information of this world like how to process materials from the Kuuderun Great Forest, and a lot more information which Redhead didn't know.

Really, Gobujii helped out a lot.

After expressing my gratitude, I start eating Gobujii's body. By expanding my mouth beyond the limit, I finish eating him in three mouthfuls.

Honestly, Gobujii isn't delicious. Since he was quite thin, there wasn't much meat and his worn-out bones easily broke from a light bite. Several hours had only passed since his death but considering he's a 20 year old goblin,

it’s hard to tell how fresh his body is.

Still, I ate all of Gobujii without leaving a single drop of blood, thinking of it as being my relative’s flesh and blood.

I believe that it’s the right thing to do.

Ability 【Old Goblin’s Wisdom】 learned

...Frankly, I didn’t even think it was possible to learn anything.

Gobujii is way too weak and as an Apostle Lord, the amount of goblins I would need to eat in order to learn would be far more than necessary.

However, I had just learned something.

Perhaps Gobujii was saving his wisdom to allow me to learn it after eating him. While that seemed unlikely, I can’t just ignore that possibility.

Or perhaps, because I was a goblin before, the foundation was already in place which made it easy to learn.

Since Gobujii had learned a lot as well, it might have also raised the learning success rate.

Anyway, I stopped thinking about the reasons on why I learned something.

In the first place, it’s probably something influenced by chance. Learning by chance and learning something when expected is something I can’t control.

For now, I’ll try out 【Old Goblin’s Wisdom】.

However, nothing changed. All I could see is the bare surface of the cavern.

Definitely not a misfire. The ability’s certainly active. This time, I take out a Burst Seed from my item box.

Upon doing so, I can see the illusion of an inverted triangle above it. Previously, 【Old Goblin’s Wisdom】 didn’t have any effects but upon touching the item, I start thinking about examining it.

Name: Burst Seed

Habitat: Throughout the Kuuderun Great Forest, Scarian Forest Prison, etc.

Characteristics: Upon receiving impact, the hard seed will burst. The current

species will burst into 3 – 8 pieces though there are many smaller variants.

Remarks: It is the only species edible. As it is, the seed is too hard to eat but it can be softened by boiling it for several hours. The texture and rich flavor would become similar to pork.

Additional Information: Upon scattering, it will attach to any unlucky or dead small animals nearby which it will use for nourishment.

While it is unlikely, it may grow faster, become harder, and its explosive power will be greater.

In that case, it would be known as 【Destructive Burst Seed】, the world’s strongest burst seed. Of the five 【God Class】 【Age of the God’s Dungeon】, it is confirmed to exist only in one location - at Orturia Extinction Forest.

At point blank range, it is capable of breaking Dragon Scales and Shells. It is said that adventurers who challenge the dungeon must first develop counter-measures for it.

Do you wish to view additional information?

≪ YES ≫ ≪ NO ≫

After a few tries, I finally understand that 【Old Goblin’s Wisdom】 allows me to see the characteristics of materials taken from Large Forests. Even information and knowledge that I did not know until now such as production of poison and many more were shown in my mind.

Somehow, it is similar to the ability 【Detect Analysis】 and since both holds extensive knowledge, I could say that I now know a lot more.

Although there’s the drawback of a lot of information being unreadable, extensive knowledge should still be useful…… Maybe just for a bit, I’d like to cultivate the real secrets of the 【Burst Seeds】.

I’d surely like 【Destructive Burst Seeds】. It’s quite interesting, being considerably dangerous.

Well, since there is also information in how to use a variety of things, I expect that it would be surprisingly helpful when developing new medicines with Alchemist-san.

I pray again towards Gobujii who is still helpful even after dying.

After saying my farewells with Gobujii, I went back out of the morgue. I smelled something good so I went to the dining hall, meeting the Sisters making breakfast at the kitchen.

The Sisters didn’t know I was here so they were surprised when I showed up. However, they immediately smiled after managing to calm down. It became warm and fluffy.

While I thought about returning to the Royal Capital at once, upon seeing their smiles, I decided to enjoy the Sisters’ home cooking after my long absence.

I didn’t have breakfast yet so it’s just right.

The smell is tempting and my stomach is empty. Even Gobujii was not enough to fill my stomach for a minute.

With that, I observe the two as I sat down proudly in one of the seats at the [Dining Hall], big enough for all group members, being used right now by the present members.

The [Kitchen] providing the dishes to the [Dining Hall] had been gradually expanded and improved. Even ten people could cook in it at the same time.

Equipment such as a cooking stoves and water supply were installed in the kitchen along with kitchen utensils such as kitchen knives and pans, manufactured by Blacksmith-san with magic metals and spirit stones.

It’s not a boast to say that it is equal to the kitchen of Tomboy Princess’

Amber Palace and above the other neighboring facilities.

The Sisters were cutting a lot of ingredients followed by throwing them into the large pan, cooking the stew using the stove fitted with a fire spirit stone, then mixing in various seasonings for the flavor. Their movements did not slow down one bit and so, breakfast was steadily cooked.

Though no one else is cooking in the kitchen other than the Sisters, there's no problem with that as they are the 【Chief Cook】, and are capable of providing enough food for the scores of residents.

Although they're in charge of cooking, from time to time, they also help out in different areas when needed. There's no need to worry though since the Sisters seemed to be enjoying it.

While waiting for the Sisters cooking, Blacksmith-san and Alchemist-san, after not seeing them for a long time, came over to the [Dining Hall].

Though they were both surprised to see me just like the Sisters, they quickly returned to their usual expressions. Not having seen me for a long time, they were happily telling me some childish stories.

Even though we've been speaking through the communication cuffs every day, there is no doubt that talking face-to face is better. The physical warmth and expressions of the body that subtly changes are hard to

express through just talking.

And as expected, the cooking of the Sisters is delicious, nourishing me and filling me with a day’s worth of vitality from the inside.

However, what one should pay attention to the most right now is Nicola, my only human child who is sleeping peacefully in Alchemist-san’s arms.

Honestly, her sleeping face is too cute. Her red cheeks were squishy and when I held her with her cute sleeping face, her five small fingers grasped my finger in return. With her small delicate body, it feels like she’d break from just a touch.

Of course, Auro, Argento, and Oniwaka are also lovely children and beneath them is Nicola who is still an embarrassingly lovely baby. I love all four of them equally and I intend to show it though, um, with Nicola’s sleeping face, I just can’t help but smile.

So cute.

She’s so cute that it’s impossible to show it with just words. Sometimes, the others observed our spot quietly.

Inheriting my blood, she's able to move in unexpected ways despite being a one year old child so it might be possible to talk with her. As expected

though, that’s just an exaggeration but it’s something to think of.

Since I was a bit worried, I check Nicola using one of the 【Ancient】 class magic items inherited from Velvet. It became clear to me that somehow, she actually has two jobs when she was born, called 【Job‐Ogre Child】 and 【Job‐Crest Maker】.

She probably obtained 【Ogre Child】 while I was an ogre. Since Auro and Argento also have that, it’s probably based from the race of the parents.

As I mentioned regarding their characteristics, their vitality is stronger than usual and their growth seems to be based on their power.

While Alchemist-san is feeling a bit tired in breast-feeding Nicola, I told her that it would help in raising up our child’s power.

As for 【Crest Maker】, it is a kind of 【Magic Occupation】 that is used for creating the Crest of Valor.

Although they have tattoos like me, Nicola’s and the other three’s tattoos are subtly different than mine.

Now though, I am slightly worried about Auro and Argento who do not have 【Crest Maker】. I’m pretty sure that it depends on one’s personal qualities and talent.

Or could it be a hidden condition?

Well, I'll put that aside.

Being healed inside by five people after so long, I decided to stay overnight at the base today.

Even though we could talk via the ear cuffs, since I came home after a lot of effort, I'd like to assist in one of my obligations which I had neglected for so long.

That's my reason.

After finishing breakfast, I walk around along with Blacksmith-san and Alchemist-san, going to the Leprechauns who were making armor and to the diligent Dwarves at their ≪Workshop≫, which is one of the major facilities for forging weapons.

Apparently, they, I mean the two people who the Dwarves took in seem to be devoted to developing new materials.

It is said that they study every day and night in order to create even just a slightly improved alloy.

Stainless steel that doesn’t easily rust from water drops, magnesium alloy that could be used in various ways, and silicon steel made from magnetic materials that can be used for the development of motors, they were things which were only told in stories but that was enough to pique their interest.

Fortunately, in regards to the expansion of the base, I was able to secure and buy new materials in large quantities when I went to the Royal Capital. There was also a recent expedition to the mountains nearby which dug up some new ores. However, there’s only enough for studying, not for making stuff.

Listening to their reports, it should be possible to make alloys with the various metals found. Saying that, I hand out the plentiful kinds of metal I bought as a souvenir beforehand.

I was very pleased from all this.

With the short term help of the Dwarves and the use of unique manufacturing methods used for 【Magic Metal】 and 【Magic Medicine】 not found in my previous life, the research results seemed to have succeeded in developing of a new alloy with interesting characteristics.

Blacksmith-san and Alchemist-san puffed up with pride, their satisfied faces being quite memorable.

Aside from Blacksmith-san, to think that Alchemist-san could be like that too, it is quite touching to see a different side of her.

Well, there was a lot of failures during the experiment but then again, failure is the stepping-stone for success.

Since we were able to make something new, the wasted materials were worth it.

For now, it’s not something that can be revealed. I do look forward to the point where a convincing report would show it to be near completion.

Although I got motivated, I will refrain from examining on what kind of alloy it is beforehand.

After that, the Sisters began cooking lunch for the afternoon.

The ingredients to be used couldn’t be found in the Kuuderun Great Forest so they were bought from the Royal Capital and the Labyrinth City.

The food is Wyvern Hamburger Steak using the meat of a Jadar Wyvern. After finishing all work in the morning, lunch became so popular that all members ate seconds.

Incidentally, after finishing the meal, I imposed a gag order on the current members.

That's because the members who were not able to eat it would probably feel jealous. Though sharing the secret is an insignificant matter, I hope to at least strengthen their unity through this, even if it's just for a little bit.

In the near future, I intend to feed the other members the same food.

Once noon came, I went to the ≪Hot Spring Facilities≫ which Dorian-san maintains with great effort.

The ≪Hot Spring Facilities≫ could be freely used by the Elves. They, the visitors, gave the alias ≪Parabellum Spa≫ to the Hot Spring. Only a few elves were excluded from entering.

Their baths where placed at a distance with a Japanese-style premise like wall put in place which surrounds the hot spring. It had become splendid over time, the natural and peripheral equipment having increased.

The Dwarves who were making armor with Mithril had set up their own shop that sells delicate accessories, known as ≪Dwarf's Equipment and Glass Hammer≫.

There was also the restaurant ≪Beckoning Cat’s Increasing Order≫ and not only is it reasonably priced, the ingredients used are remarkably inexpensive.

Within the constantly expanding ≪Farmlands≫, there is the ≪Blessing of the Forest Spirits≫ which sells cheap fresh vegetables and fruits which were enhanced by spirit stones. It is very popular for the Elf wives.

For something new and dangerously addictive for the greedy, there is the late night gambling house ≪Casino Bacalar≫.

For the gamblers who ran out of money, there is the place that lends money which attracts those who lost or those with debt, known as ≪Debt Hell≫.

In the evening, for customers who don’t want to tire themselves out from returning late at night or those who want to stay for the night, they could stay at the simple one-story inn, ≪Hot-spring Hotel Tyra≫.

By reserving at the ≪Hot-Spring Mansion and Ogre’s Kiln≫, they can stay at lavish rooms which utilizes magic items for better comfort. They can also use various services such as the hot spring on their own convenience.

That's the current state.

To be frank, I didn’t think we’d get such results with just the hot spring.

However, being involved in various businesses is not a bad idea.

Even if we continue being mercenaries, the number of members would likely increase to 1000 in no time and it'll be hard to feed them all.

For now, with the ≪Farmlands≫ where vegetables are grown and my 【Lesser Giant Generation】, our food expenses can be controlled and there's no need to harvest ingredients outside.

Although it's possible to buy a lot of ingredients and equipment for all members, we would need a lot of money for that.

So while we were improving the base in many ways for additional income, in the future, we would need to develop ways to receive more income.

With that reason, it is just right to use the various established stores as a way of training.

Well, it's quite hard at first but since I took the chance of planning deep around the Elves livelihood, it should be successful after some time.

With this, the burden on my shoulders became lighter.

The Elves want to continue being good neighbors in the future and so, our position would remain excellent and superior.

After thinking and worrying about how to further improve ≪Parabellum Spa≫, I finally got the massage oil (derived from aroma oil) from Dorian-san.

While she is the one who made it, I was the one who taught her massaging techniques such as what is right and wrong, explaining and improving it at the same time.

The usual every day fatigue was healed with relaxation.

In the end, the massage was good.

In the evening, after a long time, I finally drank liquor along with Father Elf.

While drinking elven wine at the hot spring exclusive for the top brass, the hot spring felt better thanks to the taste of the wine. Since it was dug out in a way to face the scenery outside, the taste improved while drinking and watching the glowing stars in the night sky.

In the end, it’s nice to have a drinking companion. We talk about stories regarding Father Elf’s younger brother.

His younger brother is someone I allowed and invited in the hot spring in exchange for ten barrels of wine.

For several days, Younger Brother Elf would stay in ≪Parabellum Spa≫ along with Father Elf. While he considered the various stores quite interesting, he wanted to enjoy the variety of hot springs the most.

After getting exhausted from a long day, he was completely stuck in the hot spring and became more energetic after getting out.

Afterwards, Younger Brother Elf and Father Elf had exchanged a few words, the former requesting and getting a communication cuff.

While I haven’t spoken with the Younger Brother Elf yet, the cuff gave me information via the clone buried in it.

As expected of brothers, he is just like a dandy uncle similar to Father Elf. They are quite graceful despite being considered as elderly men.

Besides, since he has quite a high position in the ≪Green Arrow Star Village≫, it’s fine to be in familiar terms with him if he wants to.

Well, it'll be easy to be on good terms with him thanks to the hot spring.

There’s no doubt that the Hot Spring is a valuable place.

I collect as much information as I can and upon understanding the true value of the [Hot Spring], I don’t intend to give any discounts.

Younger Brother Elf seems to have quite a bit of political power and right now, he plans to head towards the Royal Capital. He promised that after arriving, he'd like to conduct full-scale business negotiations in various ways.

Since Father Elf also told me to 『Get along with my Younger Brother』, I intend to be friendly with both for a long time.

Since it was already late at night, I let Father Elf stay at the ≪Hot Spring Mansion and Ogre’s Kiln≫ while finishing the few necessary procedures.

Having enjoyed the night today, I quickly finished.

Day 182

Due to the current requests, with probably more coming in the future, the members are scattered in various places.

As for the contents of the requests, they are:

Town Defense

Escort of Noble's Convoys between territories

Subjugation of a band of thieves hiding in the nearby mountains

Subjugation of aggressive monsters

And many more

Before, our only client was the Tomboy Princess. However, thanks to the mercenary group's name becoming well known, many new clients have suddenly appeared, forming a queue.

Due to the recent coup d'état significantly affecting public order, thieves and bandits are moving about in the open. Knowing this, I've sent members towards villages where the feudal lord or village chief feels troubled by the situation. By doing this, we should be able to take about half of the current requests.

By completing the requests we receive, we would gain more trust. Even though we're not in a dire situation, there's no reason to decline something

that compensates with lots of gold.

For their convenience, I let the members who would become useful in the future gather around the mansion in the Royal Capital and the Labyrinth City Purgatory. By adjusting their schedules, they should be able to perform requests.

Though there are some who didn't want vacation to end, they'll just have to be patient for their own sake.

Before a full-scale mobilization, some more preparations are needed so I'll treat them well for now.

Once I gave out instructions and finished breakfast, I head back towards the Royal Capital.

After being seen off by Blacksmith-san, I enjoy my trip in the air for a bit.I caught several flying monsters on the way and ate them but didn't learn anything in the process. As expected, I would need to stop and hunt more of them. I stop eating after a certain amount and hasten my pace.

Before long, I catch sight of the Royal Capital. After landing on the ground, I use the 【Proof of Belonging to Royal Authority】 to enter.

Previously, there weren't that many people out on the town's streets near

the Castle. Now though, the place is back to normal and full of vigor, just like in the past. Humans are walking about as voices continue to try and attract customers.

As expected of the Royal Capital. For now, I head towards the mansion that had been given to me as a reward, located in the boundary between the Nobles' District and the Castle District.

In my trek, while walking around and checking out the prices of various merchandises, people around were gradually whispering and pointing at me.

Thanks to my superior hearing, I can hear them without doing anything. Still, I use 【Wiretap】 against the noise to try and get a clear understanding of what they are saying.

『Look. That’s the trump card I’ve heard from the stories.』

『His skills are the real deal. From the beginning, I saw him kill a Jadar Wyvern in one hit. That guy is terrifying.』

『Haa haa. Amazing, real one, the real one, it’s the real one! Buhaa!!』

...is what they are saying.

Looks like a lot of them were present during my fight in the arena. They were whispering about my active role as a member of the Tomboy Princess' camp in the coup d'état. Also, there are some young and old men and women who have an atmosphere similar to that of the First Queen and Dark Hero.

While people quietly pray to the Gods using gestures, right now, I doubt that that's a good thing.

I feel troubled by the number of people gazing at me with bloodshot eyes and flushed cheeks. They have the same ecstatic smile as the First Queen.

This is really hard. Their eyes seem to hold some sort of pressure and I can't help but shiver from the chills running down my back. Even in town, the other party just stares at me and there's nothing I can do about it. It had turned into a sort of battle with an instant death condition.

Religious fanatics are truly scary. For me who is more like a militaristic thief, my compatibility with this kind of situation is the worst. Thanks to the stress, my shoulders became stiff.

With my mood souring, I quickly buy a bunch of barbecued chicken from a stall before leaving for the mansion.

However, I could see and feel the signs of numerous stalkers following behind me so I move ahead by jumping around the rooftops. As expected, they couldn’t do anything. I hear what sounds like regretful sighs but I ignore it.

I would just become more depressed if I took notice.

Thus, I finally arrive at the mansion located in the border between the Nobles' District and Castle District. Waiting for me is Kanami-chan who I proceed to hug.

Not knowing the situation, Kanami-chan couldn’t help but grumble a bit before she decided to bury her face in my chest. Looking at her arms, they were slender but had the same strength as heavy industrial machinery.

While she’s fine if it’s me, for others, she would break all of their bones, cause their internal organs to overflow from their mouth, and end them by splitting their body into two.

No. I’m pretty sure Kanami-chan won’t go that far. She should be able to keep her strength in check without any problem. Still, she probably has enough strength to crush boulders with ease.

While she is initially shocked from my unusual actions, she now feels

embarrassed. Even though she's shaking her head out of embarrassment, I refuse to let her go. She slowly calms down in time.

Once I finally let Kanami-chan go, she sighs out of relief.

Behind the bewildered Kanami-chan is Redhead who has a bitter smile. Along with them are Auro and Argento who were looking at Kanami-chan with envy. Together, they all smile at me and greet me with 『Welcome back』.

It might be a bit embarrassing but I answer back with 『I' m back』.

Finally returning, I immediately decide to renovate the Mansion. First, I plan to turn two of the guest rooms in the first floor into a shop so I start expanding there. I keep tampering the place until nothing's left untouched. Some walls got demolished then expanded, all in order to accommodate the interior planning.

The question now is what kind of shop would be set up in the guest rooms.

There are many things that can be done. The girls, led by Kanami-chan, start by planning around their experience of the oil massage received from ≪Parabellum Spa≫. In the meantime, the leprechauns want to buy and sell the clothes they were making.

While it hasn’t been decided yet on which plan will go ahead, I think that a Stone Sauna would be quite popular with the nobles of the Royal Capital. I intend to take into account on how the place should look.

Some small adjustments will be made to the work schedule later since there’s already a rough idea on what should be done next.

Using my connections with the Tomboy Princess, it’s possible to employ famous and skilled craftsmen in the Royal Capital. Because of that, the renovations should be finished in a short time.

Still, in order to shorten the work period even more, I mobilize the skilled subordinate members.

Increasing manpower and allowing them to train at the same time, it’s just like killing two birds with one stone. Or rather, since both the cost and time needed are also shortened, maybe one could say that it’s killing four birds with one stone.

Be that as it may, it would still take a few days to complete the remodeling of the first floor into a shop.

In the afternoon, I was diligently processing lumber while thinking on how to decorate the merchandises that will be lined up in the future.

Thanks to 【Craftsman】, I can learn the process of making stuff just by watching the numerous professionals in the surroundings. I had obtained that ability thanks to the 【Demigod of Shaping’s Divine Protection】 that I learned a few days ago.

To the others, it looks like I managed to learn a lot even though I have just started making items. One man, specifically a craftsman in his 50’s, seems to look at me in high regards. Even though it’s only been a short time, he is now instructing me techniques that he taught to his disciples.

The Master Craftsman speaks bluntly yet he’s method of teaching is simple and precise. Thanks to my ability, I easily learn the techniques just by observing.

After finishing an item according to his teachings, the Master Craftsman looks pleased and nods with some satisfaction. Because he seems to have a strict character, it is said that only a few of his disciples manage to get the same reaction from him.

Seeing me learn from the Master Craftsman through observation alone, his disciples who are in their 30’s can’t help but react in astonishment.

I am grateful for the techniques of the Master Craftsman which I easily absorbed. At the end of the day, I decide to serve elf liquor at night as a form of thanks.

The party is held in the garden, the butlers and maids working in the mansion also joining in.

I took charge in cooking the main dishes of the party. Since it’s an outdoors party, I find it suitable to barbecue the meat of Black Fomorians and the vegetables obtained from the Farmlands.

I burn the charcoal processed from lumber taken from the Large Forest followed by placing the food in large volumes over a huge wire mesh. I prepare Yakisoba using an iron plate and it is satisfying. In fact, it seems to be quite popular.

Preparing and cooking a considerable amount of food one by one for each members isn’t really that time consuming.

However, there’s still a lot of people so Auro decided to help out.

With the parent and child’s teamwork, there is enough food even for everyone even though there are some who are gluttonous. Doing this to train the body at the same time was worth it.

I could say that the party’s quite successful.

Day 183

For the first time in a while, I'm in charge of training our experimental youth corps Solitude this morning.

Since I've entrusted them to Redhead for two days, the children seem to have mimicked her way of fighting as their movements resemble the way a beast moves for some reason. As they're frequently relying more on their fighting abilities than [Arts], you can say that they're gradually becoming members of Parabellum.

After finishing the morning training, I mix in with the workers and help them with remodeling the store around noon. Since it's their second day on the job the workers know what to do and they seem to be doing their work faster.

We continue working in a more efficient way until dusk and we've gotten considerably closer to completion of the shop. As they are very skilled craftsmen and their work speed is amazing, I praise the workers and thank them for their services by offering them some liquor. Not the elven liquor but the one I obtained from the labyrinth.

Having some liquor after hard work felt great. However after drinking up to a certain extent, we stop. They have to work early tomorrow morning after all.

Day 184

Right after midnight, the party of Minokichi-kun and my second son Oniwaka was attacked by someone. However, they were not harmed. The attackers on the other hand, were annihilated. The course of events of this surprise attack can easily be explained.

At first the consciousness of Minokichi-kun's beloved pet beast, who was sound asleep on a pillow, was triggered as it sensed multiple presences approaching. When it roughly checked the surroundings with its hearing and sense of smell, it realized it was an enemy, as it heard soft sounds coming from every direction and it smelled the body odor of dozens of humans. After the team searched for the enemy, a more accurate number of 33 was communicated through the ear cuffs, while the enemy had slowly approached in parallel.

While Minokichi-kun was sleeping in a [Skeleton Centipede] that rearranged its framework into an enlarged tent, other powerful members such as Asue-chan noticed the group approach. Countermeasures communicated through the ear cuffs, as it was decided that only Minokichi-kun would make a sortie upon his personal request. He was the only person that was sleeping outside, so it was convenient. As the enemy entered the attack range, the [Skeleton Centipedes] threw out special smoke-balls that inflicted abnormal statuses [Paralysis] and [Coma]. Right after that, Minokichi-kun jumped out of bed and started trampling on the escaping troops.

From the start of the battle until the end, no more than 10 seconds had

passed. Several people were cut and slain by one swing of the axe, and even more were killed by the Lightning Flames that spread out and scorched the earth. As Minokichi-kun further increased his power, he has become even more reliable. Normally I would tell him to secure captives in order for them to tell their true intentions, but since it’s Minokichi-kun, it can't be helped. His physical prowess aside, not much has changed from the old days and his intellect remains the same. The attack lacked imagination even more so because it was a ranged one.

Since it was a massacre, it’s disappointing that there were few enemy corpses that kept somewhat of a figure for us to examine and we were not able to discover one article that showed their allegiance. Even though the enemy consisted of beastmen and humans and it was a mish-mash of mercenaries, hired to attack Minokichi-kun and the others, I can’t say for sure that there was no unit they were all dressed in similar uniforms gathered out of stolen equipment.

With swords coated with a paralysis poison, daggers coated with a lethal poison, an unlimited supply of illegal medicines, dark containers filled with deadly poison hidden in various places on their bodies, longcoats and trousers made out of firm leather which held a high effect of 【Body Concealment】, magic boots that muffle footsteps; this was an assassin’s perfect wardrobe. While I’m assuming the enemy belonged to something outside the Sternbild Kingdom, I’m certain that the members of the organization are somewhere in the country.

The reason Minokichi-kun and the others were attacked probably originated

from the war within the Sternbild Kingdom. While I've already been thinking for a long time that I would be regarded as highly dangerous by other countries because the war potential that Parabellum possessed was superior in both quality and quantity, I now know for a fact that we're regarded as dangerous from the information gathered from the group. Even though parts were removed immediately, there are things indicating it. It doesn't say which countries, but there are places like that.

They concluded that since the leader, me, cannot be touched since I'm in the Royal Capital - and there was no more physical way to do it after I cleared out all the spies in the Royal Capital - they wanted to swiftly erase the military unit of Minokichi-kun and Asue-chan, who are my main fighting force. Otherwise my scouting potential might accumulate to such an extent that it would impact their possibility to escape. Even though I think they were completely annihilated, I told all military units to be cautious for the time being.

With this omen of the start of a new war, I began to feel a little excited again.

Day 185

The young brother of the elf arrived at the Royal Capital early this morning, and came to my estate. As a present for the Elven Liquor, I've prepared several kinds of high-grade liquors from the [Labyrinth City] Purgatory, as well as some rare magic metals and ores. The younger brother might have heard from Father Elf that I'm quite the drinker and as one would expect from the chairman of an established business, the provisions were considerably good. As I lead him through the foyer of my estate, we talk about business. Alongside the younger brother is a shrewd young boy – his son – who is entranced by the good looks of Kanami-chan, who is next to me.

I smile wryly to the younger brother, as his son is absentmindedly listening to our discussion while staring at Kanami-chan.

Through negotiation an excellent number of contracts were signed. Over at our company -- various rights for land and business were put together to support Parabellum in exchange we will give them the right to use the hot spring and the raw materials in the Kuuderun Great Forest. To be frank, he was only looking to go to the hot springs. Even though the younger brother was trying to hide it, he was totally immersed when I accidentally revealed my plans to upgrade the hot spring in the near future. He's like a hot spring addict. I understand the response since the hot springs are very comfortable, but is it fine to react so obvious like this? I don't think so.

Well, there are only a few specific places in this world that have natural hot

springs. Even so, there are quite a few places you can go to. Then again, «Parabellum Springs» has a variety of curious things in the hot water, such as bubbles and lights, which is enough to consider it a first-class hot spring. The younger brother was agreeing to everything concerning hot springs until his son stopped him. This conversation turned out to reveal interesting information about his personality. Even though it was such a short time frame, I was able to understand the personalities of both of them. At least the contents of the contract will be followed as long as there are no special conditions.

When either one of us breaks the terms of the contract, a suitable compensation will be provided. It seems that I'll be able to continue our good relations for now.

Because our business discussion ended, I went back to remodeling the estate. As it looked like both elves wanted to observe the state of affairs, I left it to Kanami-chan to entertain both of them. Without any further problems, the day ended like that.